

Israel must carry out substantial withdrawal — Fatchett

HEBRON (AP) — Israel must carry out a "substantial and meaningful" withdrawal from the West Bank, British Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett said. After meeting in Hebron with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Mr. Fatchett said Britain wanted to become "constructively engaged" in the Mideast peace process during its six months of EU presidency. "We are looking for substantial and meaningful redeployment by the Israeli government and... we also stress that we oppose any action that preempts the final status negotiations," Mr. Fatchett said. Mr. Arafat praised the Europeans for "saving the peace process" and "moving to protect the peace and push it forward." The Israeli government has accused the EU of being "unbalanced" in its criticisms of Israel.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الراي»

Pope confirms intention to visit Israel

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Pope John Paul II has confirmed his intention to visit Israel but no date has been set. Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Moshe Katsav said after meeting the pontiff Friday. The Pope has said on several occasions that he hoped to visit Israel and Mount Sinai in Egypt during 2000. There has only been one papal visit to the Holy Land, that of Pope Paul VI in 1964. The two men also discussed "questions concerning how Israel will prepare to welcome the millions of pilgrims expected at the jubilee in 2000," a spokesman at the Israeli embassy in Rome said. Mr. Katsav said that Israel had devoted \$750 million over the last four years to finance infrastructure projects to cope with the expected pilgrim influx. The money was spent on improving entry points into Israel such as airports and border crossings. In 2000 itself, a further \$250 million will be made available for the jubilee preparations.

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Britain sends aircraft carrier to Gulf as Ritter's team leaves Iraq

U.S. rejects proposals to replace U-2 spy planes with Russian aircraft, add Russian, French, Chinese experts to inspection teams

Combined agency dispatches

BRITAIN IS sending an aircraft carrier to the Gulf as tensions rise over Iraq's latest blocking of a United Nations weapons inspection team, the British defence ministry said Friday.

As a team of 16 inspectors left Iraq accused by Baghdad of spying for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), British Defence Secretary George Robertson ordered the carrier HMS Invincible to sail from the Eastern Mediterranean as a "contingency decision."

"We will be back," U.S. arms expert Scott Ritter, told reporters outside the headquarters of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) before his departure.

"The departure of this team in no way reflects a change in UNSCOM's determination to conduct inspections or to have these inspections led by chief inspectors of the executive chairman's choosing, to include myself," he said.

Iraq has since Tuesday refused to supply escorts for the inspection team — led by the former U.S. major and Gulf war veteran and made up of nine

Americans, five Britons, an Australian and a Russian — effectively blocking access to weapons sites.

Baghdad has accused Mr. Ritter of being a spy for the CIA and the make-up of the inspection team of being biased towards countries who want to prolong sanctions against Iraq.

Meanwhile, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen rejected Friday a proposal to replace U.S. U-2 spy planes with Russian reconnaissance aircraft on U.N. missions over Iraq.

Weighing in on a Russian proposal to swap the high-flying U-2 for Russian spy planes, Mr. Cohen said, "The U-2 is recognised by all concerned as a very capable aircraft and is providing valuable information and ought to continue."

An official Iraqi spokesman told newspapers Friday that "Iraq welcomes the Russian offer to send planes to carry out surveillance missions in the place of American U-2 spy planes."

"Iraq has said on several occasions that the determination of the United States to use their U-2 planes over Iraq does not serve the mission of UNSCOM," Mr. Cohen also objected to proposals to tilt the U.S.-dominated composi-



American U.N. weapons inspection team leader Scott Ritter after his arrival in Bahrain from Iraq, Friday. The American-led team of U.N. inspectors left Baghdad Friday with a pledge to return, easing a standoff with Iraqi officials (AP photo)

tion of U.N. arms inspection teams by adding Russian, French and Chinese arms experts to them.

The decision was up to the UNSCOM, Mr. Cohen said, but "we think obviously that the United

States participation should not be downgraded or in any way diminished."

"If there are others who can provide the expertise that is necessary, that is one thing," he said. "But it should not come at the

expense of the United States."

U.S. officials have previously argued that members of the U.N. inspection teams be chosen for their expertise not their nationality.

Three Israeli soldiers wounded, Hizbollah fighter killed in south Lebanon

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — A Hizbollah guerrilla was killed and three Israeli soldiers were wounded in a clash in south Lebanon on Friday, officials said.

Guerrillas from Hizbollah launched an early morning ambush on the Sojoud post in the central sector of the Israeli self-declared security zone, using anti-tank rockets and automatic weapons, said the radio of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia.

It said the Shiite Muslim guerrillas wounded three Israelis in the attack, and left one of their own fighters dead at the scene.

An Israeli army spokesman in Jerusalem confirmed the attack, saying the three wounded Israeli soldiers, from a unit of parachute commandos, suffered only light injuries.

He added that an Israeli unit which arrived on the scene in support also came under mortar fire, but suffered no casualties.

A spokesman for Hizbollah in Beirut confirmed the attack on Sojoud, but refused to confirm or deny if the group had suffered casualties.

Following the attack an Israeli warplane fired two missiles into the Iqlim Al Tuffah Heights, a Hizbollah stronghold north of the Israeli-occupied zone and around 50 km south of Beirut, police said.

"The targets [of the air-raid] were destroyed," a spokesman for the Israeli military said.

Israeli artillery also rained down shells on positions north of the zone, damaging a house in the village of Jarou, police said.

No casualties were reported from the air raid or the shelling.

Israel meanwhile lodged a formal complaint Friday about an alleged Hizbollah attack on a village within the occupied zone.

Israel told the international committee monitoring a truce in south Lebanon that a house in the village of Debel near Bent Jbail, had been "seriously damaged" in the attack.

The committee — made up of representatives from France, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the United States — oversees a truce reached following Israel's 1996 Grapes of Wrath invasion of Lebanon under which both Israel and Hizbollah undertake to avoid civilian casualties.

Egypt, Sudan to resume river traffic at end of month

CAIRO (AFP) — River traffic along the Nile between Egypt and Sudan is to resume from Jan. 30, Sudanese External Trade Minister Osman Al Hadi Ibrahim has said.

The Sudanese official told reporters that river traffic between Aswan (southern Egypt) and Wadi Halfa (northern Sudan) would resume following a four-year interruption caused by tense relations between the two countries.

The Sudanese minister, who arrived in Cairo Wednesday, held meetings with his Egyptian counterpart Ahmad Goweili on promoting economic cooperation.

Mr. Goweili announced the formation of two joint committees, one including top officials of the two countries' trade ministries and the other grouping businessmen, to study investment projects.

The Egyptian minister said he expected an "increase in commercial exchanges" due to "the will of the governments of both countries to remove obstacles hindering trade."

Mr. Goweili said Wednesday that the volume of trade between Egypt and Sudan stood at \$45 million until the suspension in 1993 of a trade

protocol signed between the two countries the year before.

Relations between Egypt and Sudan soured in 1989 after Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir came to power in Khartoum at the head of an Islamist government.

They were especially strained by the 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa. Cairo accused Khartoum of ordering the attack and harbouring the perpetrators, but Sudan has denied the allegations.

Erbakan remains defiant after ban of Welfare Party

ANKARA (AFP) — A defiant Necmettin Erbakan said Friday that his Islamist Welfare Party's movement would grow despite a move by Turkey's constitutional court to dissolve the party.

Appearing at a press conference shortly after the ban was announced, former Premier Erbakan also called on his supporters "to stay calm" and not be agitated by possible provocations.

"The closure of Welfare is a grave judicial mistake," Mr. Erbakan said. "But this will not prevent the mission of Welfare from growing bigger and coming to the power."

"Despite this unjust move, I call on our community to stay calm and not be agitated by certain provokers who would want cause unrest," he added.

Mr. Erbakan also said Welfare would apply to the European human rights court regarding the constitutional court move. "This verdict will also be gravely criticised in Europe," he said.

"There were similar moves, party bans in the past. But those failed to stand before the will of the people. Also this time they will not be able to stand before the will and choices of the people," Mr. Erbakan said.

The constitutional court, Turkey's highest judicial body, dissolved the Islamist Welfare Party for activities against the country's secular regime, court president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, announced.

The constitutional court also ruled that, with the party banned, Mr. Erbakan and two of his aides must be

stripped of their seats in parliament.

Mr. Erbakan and the two aides were also barred from Turkish politics for five years, Mr. Sezer told a news conference.

The Welfare Party, which was dissolved Friday, has added to more than 40 political parties banned by Turkish authorities since 1960.

Most of those parties were communist, pro-Kurdish or

'Despite this unjust move, I call on our community to stay calm and not be agitated by provokers'

Islamist.

Months after a May 1960 military coup, the first of its kind in the Turkish republic's 74-year history, the ruling conservative Democratic Party, that had been toppled in the army intervention, was closed down.

The next year, the party's leader and ex-Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and two of his close aides, the former interior and foreign ministers, were sentenced to death for treason and executed.

With Friday's ban on Welfare, Mr. Erbakan witnessed the closure of his third consecutive party on charges of undermining Turkey's secular regime.

Mr. Erbakan's National Order Party was closed down in 1972, following a second military coup in modern Turkey's history.

His next political group, the National Salvation Party, was banned after another

coup in 1980, but this time the military administration's decree ordered the closure of all the country's more than 20 parties.

More than 10 left-wing parties have suffered closures since the 1960s on charges of communist activities, which had been banned in Turkey until 1990.

In recent years, it was the pro-Kurdish parties facing bans on charges of separatism.

The Democracy Party (DEP) was dissolved in June 1994, with several of its administrators being sentenced to prison terms for collaborating with the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). The PKK has been fighting the Turkish government for an independent Kurdish state in the country's southeast since 1984.

Four former DEP deputies, including Leyla Zana, winner of the European Parliament's Sakharov Freedom of Thought Award in 1995, are still serving 15-year prison terms on charges of belonging to the PKK.

Among the banned leftist parties, the Turkish United Communist Party, has brought its 1991 closure to the European human rights court which is expected to announce its decision on the case this year.

The Turkish Greens Party was also among those banned groups in recent years. The constitutional court, Turkey's highest judicial body, ruled to dissolve the environmentalist group in 1994 after it failed to gather its national congress within three years after its creation, in violation of Turkish law.

EU commissioner says Algerian government not responsible for massacres

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The Algerian government cannot be held responsible for the wave of massacres that has left at least 1,000 people dead this year, the European Union (EU) Commissioner in charge of relations with the North African state said Friday.

"My personal feeling is that the government has no responsibility at all," Manuel Marin, who will accompany a mission of EU ministers to the country next week, told a press conference here.

The commissioner's view is not shared by international human rights groups, who believe that the Algerian authorities have, at least, been guilty of failing to come to the assistance of communities that have been attacked.

Mr. Marin said the aim of the EU mission would be to "establish a dialogue with the Algerian authorities."

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said Friday he had no information to suggest that the Algerian armed forces are involved in the ongoing massacres in the North African country.

Information available does not confirm allegations that the Algerian army could be involved in the killing of civilians in Algeria, Mr. Vedrine told France 2 Television.

"But we do not have totally exact information either," he said, adding: "It is quite difficult to get a clear idea of what is going on in Algeria. A delegation of European ministers will travel to Algeria next week to discuss the violence rocking the country, with which France has long links."

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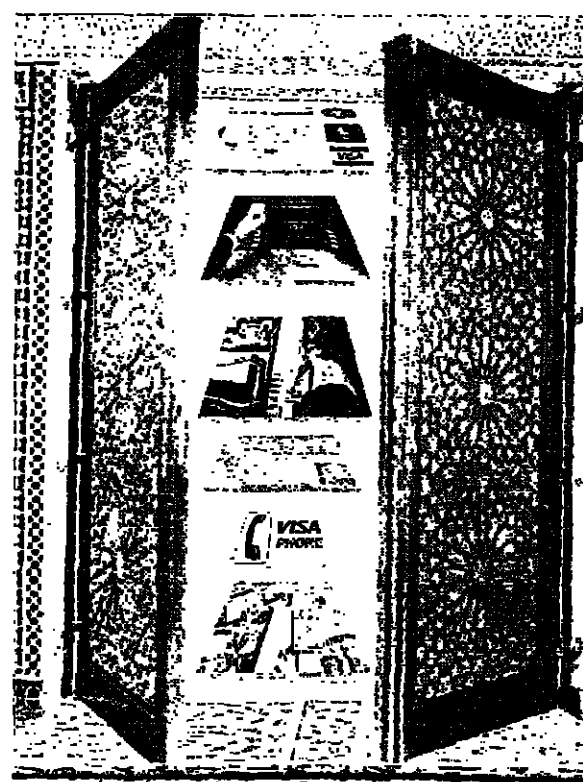


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Syria predicts U.S. will publicly repudiate Israeli prime minister

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria said Friday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies will anger Washington to the extent that it will publicly disavow his attempt "to kill the peace process."

Al Baath, the newspaper of the Syrian ruling party, called Mr. Netanyahu's policy "insane and arrogant" and aimed "to kill the peace process."

"Netanyahu is bringing to Washington in a few days several matters which deserve a lukewarm reception by President Bill Clinton," the paper said.

Al Baath called the Israeli premier "an obstructionist" who is "more arrogant and insane" than ever. Mr. Netanyahu is scheduled to meet Mr. Clinton Tuesday, and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is to meet the U.S. president two days later.

Khamenei condemns world's 'silence' over recent massacres in Algeria

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei condemned Friday "the coldness and silence of international organisations" in the face of a recent wave of massacres in Algeria.

"This silence may encourage massacres like those that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said.

On Monday more than 200 of Iran's 270 deputies called on Islamic countries and the U.N. to intervene "to put an end to the massacre and pillage of the Algerian people."

"This tragedy is without doubt the work of great powers and sworn enemies of Islam who are attacking the innocent and defenceless Muslim people of Algeria," the deputies said.

Iran's supreme leader warns Pakistan against religious violence

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned Pakistani leaders Friday that violence against the Shiite minority there could spread, further deepening inter-Muslim conflict in Pakistan.

"If justice is not upheld, other religions may consider defending themselves," Ayatollah Khamenei said during Friday prayers at Tehran University.

Beirut trying to block Israeli withdrawal from south — SLA chief

MARIJAYOUN (AFP) — The chief of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia said he fears Beirut is trying to "block" implementation of a U.N. resolution calling on Israel to withdraw from south Lebanon.

Antoine Lahad, speaking at his headquarters here Thursday night, said he is worried "Lebanese leaders are acting to hinder application of [U.N.] Resolution 425," approved by the U.N. Security Council in 1978.

Police suspect the five, who escaped from a high security jail Dec. 26, may have carried out the killings in Lahore, capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab.

The escapees had been jailed on charges of involvement in scores of sectarian killings in Punjab.

Mr. Lahad, a retired Lebanese military general, also called on the Lebanese government "to work to obtain the full application of Resolution 425 and that, I hope, in 1998."

He added that if the Lebanese government is not working for implementation of the resolution, "the leaders in Beirut are committing an act of high treason."



CONFRONTATION IN GAZA STRIP: A Palestinian police officer, left, aims his AK-47 assault rifle at Israeli soldiers during a confrontation that occurred Thursday in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis. Israeli-Palestinian tension has been rising in recent days ahead of separate meetings U.S. President Bill Clinton has scheduled with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat for next week (AP photo)

Hamas calls on Arafat to resume armed attacks against Israel

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian militant movement Hamas called on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat Friday to respond to Israeli intransigence over the peace process by resuming armed attacks.

"[Palestinian National] Authority must return to the path of Jihad [holy war] because it is the only way to force the Israeli enemy to make concessions and recognise the rights of the Palestinian people when he meets

Mr. Clinton two days later, Sheikh Yassin told worshippers gathered for the main weekly prayers here.

"We are asking him to apply the law and not to cooperate with the Israeli enemy," he said.

Holy See, Palestinian leaders form mixed commission to develop church's services

VATICAN CITY (VIS) — Following is the complete text of a communiqué released Thursday by the Holy See Press Office on the formation of a mixed commission between the Holy See and Palestinian leaders.

"The idea of forming a mixed commission between the Holy See and Palestinian leaders certainly did not originate only in recent days. It had been expressed a number of times by both parties and finds its foundation in the joint communiqué released Oct. 25, 1994, with which relations between the Holy See and the Palestinian Liberation

Organisation (PLO) were made official and a PLO office or representation to the Holy See was opened.

"The past few days' sojourn in Rome of the director of said office, Afif Safieh, has made it possible to speak again about the idea and to project its realisation, even if for now it has not been decided who will comprise the mixed commission, or when the first meeting will be held. It is foreseen that, when this happens, an agenda and a work methodology will have to be established together."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:10Twinkle
- 14:30French Programmes
- 16:15Prayers
- 16:30Believe and Behave
- 17:00NBA
- 18:00Neighbours
- 18:30News Headlines
- 18:35You Bet Your Life
- 19:00Le Journal
- 19:15Ramadan Talks
- 19:35Perspective
- 20:00Cinema, Cinema
- 20:30Prism
- 21:10Time Trax
- 22:00News in English
- 22:30 Feature film: "No Greater Love"
- 23:59Country Music

PRAYER TIMES

- 05:11Fajr
- 06:32(Sunrise) Duha
- 11:46Dhuhr
- 14:36Asr
- 16:59Maghrib
- 18:21Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifich. Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 865897.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Sunny and relative warm weather conditions will prevail

with clouds appearing at different altitudes and winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds northerly-moderate, and seas calm.
Min/Max. temp.05/16
Aqaba10/22
Deserts03/16
Jordan Valley10/21
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 15 Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 51 per cent. Aqaba 50 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Bassam Karadsheh 3389200
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846070
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi 894788
Dr. Salim Daboubi 776751
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi 989601
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192. 621111. 637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs775111/26

Jordan Television661101
Radio Jordan773111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Mathas, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital(09)990990
IRBID:
Princess Rasma Hospital(02)1275555
Greek Catholic Hospital(02)127275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Hays Hospital(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information

on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:10Damascus, Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
12:00Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
17:40London, Berlin (RJ)
23:50Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)
Other Flights
09:30Al 'Arish (PF)
13:15Riyadh (SV)
15:05Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
22:30Athens (OA)
22:35Cairo (MS)
23:30London, Beirut (BA)
23:45Amsterdam (KL)
23:45Beirut (ME)
03:25Rome (AZ)
Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
12:00Milan, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
12:30London (RJ)
12:45Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45Paris, Madrid (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)
01:30Lamaca (RJ)
Other Flights
07:00Beirut (ME)
10:30Al 'Arish (PF)
14:15Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Cairo (MS)
23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (AZ)
04:20Rome (OA)
06:15Beirut (ME)
Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)

King, Crown Prince perform Friday prayers

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces, joined worshippers in performing Friday prayers at the Southern Region Command's mosque and listened to Friday's sermon, which focused on the values of the fasting month of

Ramadan. The preacher praised King Hussein's initiative to donate his own house to orphaned children. A special home, known as "Dar Al Bir", has been established to care for these children and enable them to live decent lives. Performing prayers with

King Hussein were the Aqaba governor, the Aqaba Region Authority president, senior civil and military officials and officers, in addition to tribal chiefs and dignitaries from the Aqaba governorate. Also Friday, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan performed prayers

at the University of Jordan mosque and listened to the sermon, which focused on zakat (alms to the poor). Attending the prayers with Prince Hassan were Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi and the Royal Court imam Ahmad Helayyel.

King, Queen attend Arbor Day ceremony

SALT (Petra) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor shared the Arbor Day celebration held Thursday on the grounds of Balqa Applied Sciences University in Salt with the citizens of Jordan.

The King and Queen, together with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and other dignitaries, planted olive and fruit trees during the celebration, which was organised by the Ministry of Agriculture.

King Hussein also distributed Royal medals to a number of prominent citizens and former ministers of agriculture in recognition of their interest in greening Jordan.

In a speech at the ceremony, Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha paid tribute to King Hussein for spearheading efforts towards greening the Kingdom and for setting an example for Jordanians in giving due attention to tree planting.

Mr. Khreisha noted that despite its meagre resources, Jordan has made major strides in ensuring food security and has been increasing exports of surplus fruits, vegetables, eggs and poultry.

Jordan's vegetable production rose from 45,000 tonnes in 1952 to 1.3 million tonnes in 1996, while

fruit production rose from 38,000 tonnes to 486,000 tonnes and red meat production increased from 2,000 tonnes to 16,000 tonnes in the same period, according to the minister.

Other current production totals include 800 million eggs, 100,000 tonnes of poultry, and 155,000 tonnes of milk annually, he said.

The agricultural sector employs 15 per cent of the Kingdom's total manpower, the minister stated, adding that agricultural exports in 1996 accounted for 15.4 per cent of the Kingdom's total exports and earned the country JD160 million.

The minister also reviewed plans by the Ministry of Agriculture to boost food production and reclaim land for this purpose. He noted that the Kingdom has reclaimed 680,000 dunums within the Zarqa River basin and 258,000 dunums in the arid Hammad Basin area, near the Iraqi border, over the past few years.

Referring to tree sapling production, he said the Ministry of Agriculture's nurseries last year produced more than nine million fruit and forest tree saplings which, the minister said, are being planted by individuals and organisations on thousands of dunums of land during the current winter season.



Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor plant an olive tree as part of the Arbor Day ceremonies held at Balqa Applied Sciences University on Thursday

Taking part in the tree-planting ceremony were the speakers of Parliament, the chief of the Royal Court, senior court and government officials, members of Parliament, a number of ambassadors

and high-ranking army officers. The Ministry of Agriculture plans to plant 50,000 tree saplings on 500 dunums of land on the grounds of the permanent site of the university.

No action to be taken against deputy accused of 'threatening national unity'

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government Friday said it will not take any action against Deputy Ahmed Oweidi Abbadi who, according to a government statement, "threatened the country's national unity" in a speech he made during Wednesday's Lower House of Parliament session.

"The Lower House is its own master," Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour told the Jordan Times.

In a statement issued Wednesday, the government, without naming Dr. Abbadi, denounced the deputy's comments, which it said "deviated from the subject in discussion [the budget], did not tell the truth and used personal and offensive language when referring to public officials."

The accusations Dr. Abbadi made against Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani, Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf and Minister for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi were "harmful to the country's national unity and opened the gates to the dangers of extremism and fanaticism," the statement said. All three ministers are Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

The statement also asked the House to take the necessary measures to preserve Jordan's democratic process.

But Acting Lower House Speaker Youssef Shreideh told the Jordan Times that the House will not take any measures against Dr. Abbadi.

"Every deputy has the right to say what he wants," Dr. Shreideh said. When asked why he did not intervene during the session to stop Dr. Abbadi

from making his statement, Dr. Shreideh said he did not see any reason for his intervention.

"If the government did not like what was being said then, according to House regulations, the prime minister or his deputies could have intervened," he said.

According to Arabic dailies' reports, the government asked the House to postpone Thursday's session until today after House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour returns from Egypt. Dr. Shreideh declined to comment on the reason behind the postponement.

According to Arabic daily Al-Dustour, Dr. Ensour met with 20 deputies on Thursday and discussed Dr. Abbadi's speech and its implications.

Deputies Nayef Mula and Ra'ud Bakri issued a statement condemning "any attempt that infringes on the country's national unity, its institutions and the people working in these institutions."

Dr. Abbadi, a former police officer, lashed out at the government and many of its ministers and accused present and past governments of nepotism, favouritism and putting the wrong person in the wrong place.

In a long and fiery speech, which was carried live on Jordan Television, the deputy also called on the government to stop granting citizenship to "the bedouins and citizens of neighbouring Arab countries."

"Citizenship or passports should be taken away from the [people of neighbouring Arab countries], because Jordanian identity is a great honour that should not be given to those who only want to [take advantage of that

privilege]," he said.

Dr. Abbadi added that the country has suffered from unnatural population growth, which has had its effects on Jordanians and consequences of pollution and unemployment.

According to the dean of the faculty of law at the University of Jordan, Mohammad Ghazwi, the Constitution grants deputies the absolute freedom to express themselves under the dome of Parliament.

He said as long as the deputy stays on the subject being discussed and to the articles stated in the House's internal regulations, he has parliamentary immunity.

The Constitution states that "members of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament have the freedom to speak and express their opinions within the limits of each House's internal regulations, and they should not be held accountable for any vote they cast, opinion they express or speech they deliver during the House's sessions."

Therefore, Dr. Ghazwi said, no party can take any measures against Dr. Abbadi.

Dr. Abbadi and the former editor of Shihan weekly tabloid were taken to court in August 1996 and faced charges of undermining national unity, inciting people to criminal acts, and fuelling bigotry for statements made by Dr. Abbadi in an article he wrote for the weekly tabloid in June of that year entitled "I will be relieved if the Palestinians were to go."

Dr. Abbadi and the former editor of the tabloid were acquitted of the charges two weeks before the Nov. 4 elections.

UNESCO director announces plans to expand Amman office

PARIS (Petra) — The director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Federico Mayor, Friday said he will expand the UNESCO office in Amman and give it his personal attention and support.

In a statement to the Jordan New Agency, Petra, after receiving the credentials of Jordan's Ambassador to France Adnan Talhouni, Dr. Mayor welcomed the idea of establishing a national Jordanian museum to house the Kingdom's antiquities and showcase the region's history throughout the ages and cultures.

Dr. Mayor promised to study the idea of establishing such a museum in Amman, which would be similar to Noubia Museum in Egypt. Dr. Mayor praised His Majesty King Hussein's role in establishing and maintaining regional peace and security, and commended the efforts of Her Majesty Queen Noor to support UNESCO activities.

He noted the Queen's participation in international conferences and seminars and the special interest Her Majesty takes in such areas as human heritage, children, education and archaeology.

Dr. Mayor also noted His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan's valuable contributions to the international debate on humanitarian issues and heritage and his active role and participation in international fora on human heritage.

Nine more charged with attempted murder of Iraqi diplomat, bringing total to 11

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The number of Iraqis charged with the attempted murder of the Iraqi chargé d'affaires in Amman has increased from two to 11, according to the transcript of interrogations conducted by the Criminal Court.

Earlier investigations indicated that six Iraqis were involved in the attack against Rahim Tahir, 45, on Jan. 3, including his son Samir and his mother-in-law Houriyah Abbas Kazim.

Two suspects, Qasim Rajihi, 26, and Ja'afar No'uman, 29, were originally charged with attempted murder, while Ahmad Tae'i, 28, and Ahmad Muhsin, 24, were charged with complicity in the attack.

But the Criminal Court's transcript, which was made available to the Jordan Times on Friday, showed that Mr. Tae'i and Mr. Muhsin, along with five other Iraqis who were originally being treated as witnesses, have now been charged with attempted murder.

The report identified the new suspects as Hameed Rashid Ani, 34, Namir Askar Ani, 23, Mohammad Atallah Jasim, 34, Salam Abood Jaza'a, 36, and Basim Qaid Rajihi.

Ms. Houriyah and Mr. Basim are living in Iraq and might be tried in absentia. Samir Tahir enjoys diplomatic immunity, which prevents his interrogation by the High Criminal Court prosecutor.

Mr. Tahir escaped unhurt after two unidentified gunmen, driving a blue rental car, fired one bullet at his car on Jan. 3 near his residence in the Umm Otheinah area of Amman.

The report showed that the suspects testified that the prime suspect, Qasim Rajihi, was paid 20 million Iraqi dinars (\$13,380) to carry out the assassination attempt against Mr. Tahir. In his testimony, Mr.

Qasim stated that Ms. Houriyah masterminded the attack because her son-in-law was allegedly in love with another woman and was about to marry her.

The testimonies indicated that Mr. Tahir was previously subjected to five unsuccessful attempts on his life, including one in Baghdad and four in Jordan.

The transcript said the four attempts by the suspects in Jordan failed due to "the heavy security around Arab and foreign diplomats in the country."

The first attempt on his life occurred last September near his house in the Zuy-nouneh area in Baghdad. The attack was carried out by Qasim and his brother Basim with a machine gun, which failed to work during the attempt.

Mr. Qasim previously attempted to enter Jordan using forged passports, bearing false names including Jouma'a Abdul Housin Shahid and Adnan Sadiq Ja'afar, to carry out the attack.

Following the attack, he tried to leave the country but was arrested at Al Karamah, a post on the Jordanian border with Iraq.

He testified that he used an Iraqi-made silenced pistol named Tareq, which was seized with him following his arrest.

The investigations also revealed that officials at the Iraqi passport department in Baghdad were involved in forging the passports used by the suspects.

In the attempts against Mr. Tahir, the suspects used six rental cars and lived in several flats in the Kingdom.

The charges filed against the 11 suspects include attempted murder, using false passports, possession of an unlicensed gun, instigation to murder and concealing a crime.

The High Court Prosecutor who investigated the case, Emad Keilani, is expected to request that Samir Tahir's diplomatic immunity be lifted for further investigation.

New telephone exchange to change numbers in several areas

AMMAN (J.T.) — As of Jan. 31, 1998, the new telephone exchange in Abdali district will begin operations, causing some changes in telephone numbers in parts of the capital, according to an announcement by the Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC).

The announcement said the changes will affect the following districts: Jabal Hussein, Jabal Nuzha, Tla'a Al Ali, the University of Jordan, Wasfi Al Tall (Gardens) Street, and the Ministry of Interior and Firas circle areas.

According to the changes, telephone numbers starting with 67 or 66 will have

the number 5 added to read 567 or 566. Telephone numbers in the new exchange will have seven instead of six digits.

The JTC said numbers starting with 68, 69, or 60 will also have 5 added to them at the beginning to read 568, 569, or 560, while those beginning with 70 on the left will be replaced with 562. For example, a telephone number reading 701303 will read 5621303.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications announced that the new telephone number of the post office at the Queen Alia International Airport is now 4451002.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FRENCH COMEDY CINEMA

* French comedy film entitled "La Crise" at Philadelphia Cinema at 8:30 p.m. (sponsored by the French Cultural Centre).

CONCERT

* Ramadan folkloric evening at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Display of Noor Al-Hussein Foundation (NAF) products at the

NAF Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Jan. 31 (8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.).

* Installation by Jordanian artist Ali Jabri (until Jan. 27). Also displaying contemporary Arab artist exhibition (until Jan. 27) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Al Weibdeh (Tel. 643251).

* Works by about a hundred artists from Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street, until Feb. 20 (Tel. 5536098).

Islamic Action Front seeking resumption of cooperation with government — Arabiyat

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Relegated to the fringes of the political arena as a result of their decision to boycott last November's general elections, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) is now asking the government to bring them back into the fold.

Though out of Parliament, the IAF is "still the first opposition party in the country, and we are still leading a coalition of 12 parties, independents and the Union of Professional Associations. The government should take that into consideration," newly elected IAF Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyat said Thursday in an interview with the Jordan Times.

Jordan's strongest political party, at the head of the three-month-old National Reform Forces (NRF), a coalition of opposition groups ranging from communists to nationalists, did not intend the boycott of the last elections as a long-term policy, but rather as a tactical decision, Dr. Arabiyat stressed.

"We are asking the government to resume dialogue on the major political issues and



Abdul Latif Arabiyat

we affirm that we are ready for dialogue at any time," he stated.

In his second week at the head of the front, Dr. Arabiyat, elected by acclamation to succeed another "dove" veteran politician Ishaq Farhan, said a new elections law is one of the main concerns of the IAF, and urged the government not to leave the Islamists aside in consultations on this issue.

"We expect the government and Parliament to work with us to have clean elections, a good elections law and a

good administration for the next elections," said the 64-year-old U.S.-educated leader, who is also a former Lower House speaker.

Strongly criticising the Nov. 4, 1997 elections as "projecting a poor image of Jordan abroad," Dr. Arabiyat demanded that "equality be the main feature of the new elections law."

Officials announced a few weeks ago that the government has prepared a draft elections law and said they expected it to be submitted to the Lower House before the end of Parliament's first ordinary session, in March.

According to officials, the new law would divide the Kingdom into as many constituencies as the number of deputies to be elected and lower the voting age from 19 to 18.

The Islamists are also demanding that religious and ethnic minority quotas be abolished — nine of the 80 Lower House seats are currently allocated to Christians, while three are allocated to Chechens/Circassians — and that the newly drawn constituencies be equal.

"The first requirement is that the people be convinced

by the new law, so that they will exercise their right to vote," Dr. Arabiyat said, adding that the November elections' turn out "did not even reach 20 per cent in many urban areas, which is a very bad sign for our democracy."

The last elections, clouded by widespread allegations of fraud and irregularities, were boycotted by the Islamists and other groups in protest against the one-person, one-vote system and government policies, which the opposition said were lowering the ceiling of public freedoms.

The boycott decision, however, took its toll in the Islamic movement, widening the traditional gap between "hawks," who supported it, and "doves," who advocated participation.

Two moderate leaders who participated — and won — in the elections were expelled by the IAF's mother organisation, the powerful Muslim Brotherhood, for not complying with the movement's directive.

However, Dr. Arabiyat affirmed that "the boycott decision strengthened the front."

"Our popularity is even greater now, because the people and several politicians now understand our reasons and realised that we were right [in boycotting the elections] because they have seen the results of those elections," he added.

Playing down differences between hawks and doves, Dr. Arabiyat started his term as secretary general under the motto "Reconciliation," and indicated that "the unification of major trends in the front" was one of his main objectives.

"The mere fact that Hammam Said [a former deputy, well-known for his hard-line stands] is my deputy now proves that reconciliation among different trends is not only possible, but has already been achieved at many levels," Dr. Arabiyat said.

"The main problem between moderates and hard-liners is not a matter of principles or political choices, but of how to achieve our goals, [and] which strategies to use," he explained.

"We have to be practical and pragmatic, to build on what we have in our hands at the moment," he urged.

Relentless rains in Kenya make aid, recovery impossible

NAIROBI (AFP) — Torrential rains which started pounding East Africa three months ago are making immediate recovery almost impossible as they pour down without let-up in Kenya, the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said Friday.

A WFP assessment team which has just visited Kenya's worst-hit north-eastern province said food supplies for 300,000 people in the region were severely threatened.

Many villages were under water and families living in makeshift huts have had their homes, personal property, livestock and crops destroyed by the floods, WFP spokeswoman Lindsey Davies told AFP.

"North-Eastern Province will continue to be

unreachable until March at the earliest, because most roads are under water or completely washed away," she said.

Ms. Davies said that it had been expected that the unseasonal heavy rains, caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon, would ease up early in February, but this was now doubtful.

"The compounded impact of the heavy rains and already flooded areas makes it difficult for an immediate recovery to take place, due to paralysis of markets and transport systems," she added.

Consequently, the WFP plans to extend its operations in the region, requiring additional food and transport, estimates of which are currently being

worked out.

The rains have also continued to pound the rest of the country in the past 48 hours, according to latest press reports.

In neighbouring Eastern Province, many roads and bridges connecting districts have been washed away, making commuter travel almost impossible, forcing many parents in Kitui, Makueni, Machakos and Kibwezi districts even to transport their children to school on bicycles.

Even the main Nairobi-Mombassa highway, the trade artery for Kenya, Uganda and eastern Zaire, is threatened as the rains continue to pound the country.

Torrential rains have also caused landslides, particularly in Central Province

and Mount Kenya region, some of which have destroyed homes or blocked roads.

Last Tuesday, Agriculture Minister Musalia Mudavadi warned that the country was likely to experience severe famine this year due to too much rain and floods, estimating that some 52 million hectares of cultivated land were threatened with destruction.

The Daily Nation newspaper, in an editorial Wednesday, urged the government to make contingency plans to cope with the imminent food crisis.

"The greatest danger to the entire country will come from the combined impact of the current destruction and the aftermath of this unusual weather," the newspaper said.

Croatia set to regain last Serb-held area with U.N. mission's departure

VUKOVAR, Croatia (AFP) — Croatia was Thursday to regain control of its entire territory when a U.N. mission withdrew from the once Serb-held region of Eastern Slavonia, putting a symbolic end to the 1991-95 Croatian war.

U.N. administrator William Walker was to hand over control of the region, seized by Serb rebels in mid 1991, to the Croatian president's chief of staff, Hrvoje Sarinic, at a ceremony in the former frontline village of Borovo Naselje, just outside Vukovar.

The handover, which began shortly after midday (1100 GMT) Thursday, puts into place another keystone in the ongoing peace process in the former Yugoslavia.

It was agreed in the 1995 Erdut peace accords between Zagreb and the rebel Serbs but restoration of Croatian control was delayed to avoid a flight by Serb residents.

U.S. envoy Robert Gelbard, Thursday hailed the end of the U.N. mandate in Eastern Slavonia, and urged Zagreb to respect human rights and to continue with refugee return.

Some 80,000 Croats were driven from Eastern Slavonia when it was captured by the Serbs and tens of thousands of Serbs fled to the region in 1995 to escape Croatian army offensives against other former Serb-held areas.

Reading a message from U.S. President Bill Clinton at the ceremony, he said that the United States and the international community would continue to remain engaged.

"We expect Croatia to fulfil its responsibilities, to guarantee equal treatment and full protection of the rights of all of Croatia's citizens," he said.

"The peace will not be complete until all of Croatia's people can return to their homes," he said.

To calm outstanding international concerns, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman Wednesday gave assurances that Zagreb would continue to meet its obligations over Eastern Slavonia after the United Nations leaves.



Bosnian Croat Vlatko Kupreskic adjusts his headphones prior to his first appearance before the judges of the United Nations war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague (Reuters photo)

Mr. Tudjman, who started long promised restoration of the drive to independence Croatian control over the region.

Bosnian Croat pleads not guilty to warcrimes

THE HAGUE (AFP) — A Bosnian Croat arrested last month on war crimes charges in a shootout with Dutch NATO troops pleaded not guilty Friday.

Vlatko Kupreskic, 40, pleaded not guilty on all counts before the U.N.'s International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

A former soldier with the Bosnian Croat HVO militia, he was arrested in the early hours of Dec. 18 by Dutch NATO troops and charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity for the killing of Muslim civilians in 1993 in Bosnia's central Lasva valley region.

Mr. Kupreskic was shot in the leg, arm and chest while resisting arrest.

"I do not understand why my name has been linked to these charges," a visibly tense Mr. Kupreskic told presiding judge Antonio Cassese.

Judge Cassese then adjourned the hearing to meet with Mr. Kupreskic's defence lawyer, Borislav Krajina, and the prosecutors to examine preparations for the case.

Mr. Kupreskic, from the central town of Vitez, was arrested the same day as his compatriot Anto Furundzija in only the second such arrests by NATO troops since they arrived in Bosnia in 1995.

Serb rebels seized Eastern Slavonia, whose main town, Vukovar, remains an emotive symbol of Croatian suffering after falling to the Serbs in November 1991 following a four month siege.

Zagreb seized two other Serb-held areas in lightning military operations in 1995. But under the Erdut accords, a U.N. transitional administration (UNTAES), backed by an initial 5,000 Russian and Belgian troops, was deployed for a maximum of two years to gradually reintroduce Croatian rule.

According to U.N. figures, 15,000 to 20,000 Serbs have left over the last two years out of an estimated 125,000 to 130,000 in the region when UNTAES arrived for its \$480 million mission.

Among those Serbs who have decided to remain, an elderly Serb lady who did not want to give her name admitted Thursday she was afraid, given the treatment of Serbs in the regions retaken in 1995, but said she saw little option but to stay.

"We are little afraid but what can we do, we have to stay here because we have nowhere else to go," she told AFP.

Dusko Stegnajic, 39, a trader in the market place, who in 1995 fled the southern Croatian town of Benkovac and now lives in a house originally owned by a Croat, said he would stay because he cannot return home.

"I will stay here because I have a job and can't return to my home."

Under an agreement with the United Nations, some 180 U.N. civilian police will remain in addition to international monitors, who will be watching closely the return of refugees, reconciliation and human rights.

According to U.N. estimates, the cost of reconstruction in Eastern Slavonia will be \$1.2 billion. But the region also has rich farmland, oil fields, direct access to the Danube and control over international road and rail links. The value to the Croats, notably those now able to return, is more than that, however.

Bangladesh PM urges Pakistan to take back its stranded people

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed Friday urged her Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to take back some 240,000 of his people stranded here since the 1971 Bangladesh independence.

"The Bangladesh prime minister explained that it was a humanitarian issue and taking care of such large number of people was also an economic burden for us," host Foreign Secretary Mostafizur Rahman told reporters after the two leaders held hour long official talks.

He said Mr. Sharif agreed the problem should be solved, but there was "no commitment" as to when the 240,000 "stranded" Pakistanis, called Biharis, would eventually be taken back.

The talks were held as Mr. Sharif started a two-day official visit to Bangladesh, his first after being elected back to office last year. The two sides also signed a cultural cooperation agreement.

Mr. Sharif also participated in the first ever tri-nation Business Summit with India held here Thursday. Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral left for home late Thursday after joining the summit.

In another development, the Sammito Naris Samaj (SNS), a leading women's right group, in a statement demanded that Pakistan should make an "apology for the crimes committed by the Pakistani armed forces during Bangladesh's independence war."

"Continued silence over the genocide of unarmed people and rape of women of Bangladesh would make a mockery of the principles of democracy and human rights," the statement said.

The SNS gave a petition of their demands to the Pakistani high commission Thursday. More than 25,000 were raped by the Pakistani troops and their collaborators during the nine-month war.

The Urdu-speaking Biharis refused to accept Bangladesh citizenship and have been waiting in camps to return to Pakistan.

The Biharis, who migrated from India's Bihar state after partition in 1947, sided with the Pakistani army during the 1971 independence war that saw Bangladesh created from the former East Pakistan.

Mr. Rahman said both leaders agreed to boost bilateral relations, particularly economic, adding that Dhaka and Islamabad were bound by "historical ties."

Mr. Sharif proposed establishing a previously agreed joint body to examine assets and liabilities to be shared by the two south Asian countries that remained unresolved since Bangladesh's independence.

Mr. Rahman stressed that trade and economic issues dominated the talks and Mr. Sharif proposed regular consultation among trade bodies as well as between the foreign secretary or foreign ministers' level to monitor economic and bilateral relations.

The trade balance is heavily in favour of Pakistan which imports goods worth only \$39 million, compared to Bangladesh imports of \$65 million.

Mr. Sharif described the business summit as a "courageous step" by Sheikh Hasina and urged that a mechanism be established to keep its momentum and continuity.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sharif held talks Friday with Bangladesh's President Shahabuddin Ahmed and flew by an air force helicopter to nearby Savar district where he placed wreaths at the National Martyrs' Memorial dedicated to those who died during the independence war fighting against the Pakistanis.

'Clinton will again suspend Helms-Burton measure'

NEW YORK (AFP) — President Bill Clinton Friday will again suspend part of the controversial Helms-Burton law that seeks to punish some foreign companies doing business with Cuba. White House spokesman Michael McCurry said.

Mr. Clinton already has taken such a step three times since he signed Helms-Burton into law in March 1996. His action Friday would suspend that part of the law for another six months.

Under Title III of Helms-Burton, U.S. citizens whose properties had been confiscated by Fidel Castro's Communist regime can sue in U.S. courts, foreign companies that used those properties.

The law has angered many U.S. trading partners including the European Union, Canada and Mexico. They consider it an extraterritorial application of U.S. law.

The White House announcement comes just days before Pope John Paul II is set to make his historic visit to Cuba. The Pontiff is strongly opposed to the decades-old U.S. economic embargo against the island nation.

Mr. McCurry spoke to reporters Thursday in New York where the president was travelling.

Shanghai cracks down on 'undesirable' publications

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Shanghai authorities are cracking down on growing numbers of illegal underground publications said to contain undesirable political content, a newspaper reported Friday.

The Youth Daily said the publications "Princelings of the Communist Party of China" and "Who Killed Lin Biao", plus more than 40 other titles with "grave political problems" were

sold in private book shops and unlicensed stalls.

Lin Biao, who was accused of plotting to kill Mao Zedong, died in a plane crash in 1971.

The books were understood to be published overseas and entered China in late last year before being illegally copied, reprinted and distributed through underground channels around the country, the report said.

The Shanghai Public Security Bureau's cultural unit and the News Publications Bureau held a joint meeting Thursday to hit out at illegally published materials, the report said.

Shanghai publications market control bureau director Wang Jianhua said: "These publications seriously twisted reality and deliberately harmed the reputation of Chinese

leaders."

"The harm to society is very big, especially their influence on young students," Mr. Wang said.

"We will not only strictly confiscate and search out these books, our emphasis will be to find their source and where they are stored."

The books have been sold in secret and moved around constantly to escape detection, the report said.

Powerful cyclone heads for flood-ravaged Australian state

TOWNSVILLE, Australia (AFP) — First it was floods, then a plague of spiders and snakes. Now north Queensland is battling down the hatches as a powerful cyclone heads for land, the Bureau of Meteorology said Friday.

Cyclone Katrina, a category three system packing winds of up to 250 kilometres per hour, is currently the same severity as cyclone Tracey which destroyed Darwin in 1974.

State Emergency Services (SES) spokesman Bob McLagan said it was a race against the clock. "There's a lot of debris around the place and if a cyclone comes it could become dangerous," he said.

The cyclone was early Friday 480 kilometres east-north-east of Cooktown in Queensland's north and moving in a south-south-westerly direction at seven kilometres an hour.

Bureau of Meteorology forecasters expect it to cross Australia's east coast somewhere between Townsville and the tourist playground of Cairns in the next few days.

State Emergency Services Minister Mick Veivers urged all north

Queensland residents recovering from record flooding to prepare for worsening weather.

In Townsville to inspect clean-up operations from the flooding that devastated this port city, Mr. Veivers said: "We should never underestimate the power of nature."

He advised residents to stock up on bottled water, medical supplies and tinned food and to ensure they had a portable radio with fresh batteries, torches, cooking gear and spare clothing.

Residents here have spent the week cleaning up from a record 83 cm. deluge of rain which battered the city and surrounding areas over a four-day period, causing an estimated 50 million Australian dollars (\$33.5 million) in damage.

Dozens of houses were badly damaged or washed away, road and rail links cut and at least one person died.

Mr. McLagan said there were still tree branches and other debris, such as damaged fridges and cookers left on footpaths for collection by council workers, scattered around the city.

"If it's still there (when the cyclone hits), it could

spell trouble," he said.

To add to their woes, residents here were warned Thursday to be alert for deadly snakes, spiders and scorpions lurking in the floodwaters.

North Queensland Police Commissioner Neil Kirby said there had been a noticeable increase in the number of people treated for bites.

"Snakes in particular pose a high potential for serious illness and even death," he warned. "People should be alert."

Australia is home to some of the deadliest snakes in the world. The clean-up effort continued in the area Friday with the airlift of 20 people stranded for six days in the tiny mountain village of Paluma north of here.

They had been without power since the weekend and their way out blocked by landslides.

Army experts, meanwhile, were blowing up rocks to clear roads. They were planning Friday to blow up one huge rock threatening to cause further damage to the remains of an international tourist resort on Magnetic Island where 12 units were destroyed by a landslide.

Australia resists EU call to stop uranium mine on Aboriginal site

SYDNEY (AFP) — A European call for Australia to stop uranium mining on Aboriginal territory was welcomed Friday by Aboriginals and conservationists but dismissed as hypocrisy by Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer.

The European Parliament backed its plea by calling on member states to ban imports of uranium from mines where indigenous landrights were compromised, and asked its human rights sub-committee to monitor the Australian case.

The mine site at Jabiluka, owned by Energy Resources of Australia (ERA), borders World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory.

The mine has been condemned by Australian Aboriginals and environmental groups which combined in an appeal for inter-

national pressure to stop it operating.

The resolution urged Canberra to stop the project out of respect for the status of Kakadu National Park as a World Heritage site, for the landrights of Aboriginal people and for the Vienna Declaration on indigenous rights.

Proposed by the European Green Group, the resolution described the sites as being of significance for the cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples.

It also noted a resolution by Australia's senate in October calling on the government not to proceed with the project and stated that Jabiluka as well as ERA's nearby Ranger uranium mine were on recognised Aboriginal territory.

Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) Acting Director Mark Horstman described the resolution as

a strong sign of growing international concern about uranium mining in environmentally important areas.

"It is also a sign that many countries recognise that there is a strong link between trade and environment and human rights issues," he said.

But Deputy Prime Minister Fischer said the resolution could not be taken seriously while indigenous people of northern Scandinavia had less than one tenth the rights and royalty entitlements of Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

"I will listen to the European parliament and their advisory resolutions on these matters when the Saami people are treated as the Australian governments of both persuasions treat Aboriginals," Mr. Fischer said on Australia's ABC radio.

A spokesman for Resources Minister Warwick Parer, who gave the go-ahead for the mine late last year, said the minister would await a full report on the resolution before commenting.

British Green member Hugh Kerr, who crossed swords with Mr. Fischer during a 10-day visit to Australia last year to examine land rights issues, told the European Parliament that the motion was intended to put Australia on notice.

"And I want this parliament to be on record that Europe is watching Australia very carefully on this issue and I hope that we can return to it in months to come," Mr. Kerr said.

Mr. Fischer had denounced Mr. Kerr in the Australian parliament during his visit to Australia when he spoke in support of

Aboriginal land rights across the country.

Green leader Magda Aelvoet said her group chose to highlight Australia as a matter of urgency.

"This is an explicit request to the Australian government not to proceed with this project given the fact that this site is located on legally-recognised Aboriginal territory," she said.

"It is not something just claimed by those people. It is something that Australia itself in its legal expression has recognised."

But she said while it was a strong request to European nations to act the resolution did not force them to do so.

The resolution noted that Canberra's environmental evaluation had raised concerns about the project and warned of the health effects of uranium mining.

erb-held
eparture

Serb rebels seized Eastern Slavonia, whose main town is Vukovar, remains an enclave under a UN mandate. Serbs in November 1997 following a four-month siege.

Zagreb seized two other Serb-held areas in highway military operations in the But under the final accord, a UN transitional administration (UNTA) backed by an initial force of Russian and Belgian troops was deployed for a month or two years, to eventually reintroduce civilian rule.

According to UN figures, 15,000 to 20,000 Serbs have left over the last five years out of an estimated 125,000 in Slavonia, a region where UNTA arrived in 1995. Among those Serbs, elderly Serb ladies who not want to give her admission Thursday, he said, "I am afraid of the return of Serbs in the region, but I saw little sign of this."

"We are little afraid," what can be said here, she said, "because we know where we are going."

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India's Hindu nationalists want truth on arms scandal before polls

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's Hindu nationalists Friday said documents relating to an arms scandal which toppled former Premier Rajiv Gandhi should be made public before upcoming polls, news agencies said.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) said investigations into the payoff deal with Swedish company Bofors had been kept secret for too long.

"Let the people judge," he told an election rally in the eastern city of Rourkela. "No justice is being done to the people by keeping them in the dark about the Bofors papers."

The United News of India said Mr. Vajpayee asked for the "immediate release" of the secret documents.

Rajiv Gandhi's Congress party government fell nine years ago following allegations that Bofors paid bribes of nearly \$50 million into secret Swiss bank accounts to secure a 1986 field gun deal worth \$1.3 billion.

Gandhi denied any wrongdoing until his assassination in 1991. Thursday, his Italian-born widow Sonia told an election rally that her husband was innocent and dared the government to prove his involvement.

"My husband has been a victim of malicious slander in the Bofors case," she said on a campaign tour for her husband's ailing Congress party — wracked by infighting and corruption charges against top leaders in recent years.

"Since my husband was killed, six governments have come and gone, five of them belonging to the opposition. Yet the truth (about the scandal) is to be revealed."

Mr. Vajpayee said his 13-day government, which took office as the largest parliamentary party after the 1996 elections but forced to quit over its failure to prove legislative majority, would have closely followed the case.

"If I had continued, I would have come out with the findings of the Bofors scandal," he said.

Bofors, which has been blacklisted by India, has admitted paying the bribes but has not said who received the money. An investigation has been undertaken both in India and Sweden.

The Swiss bank documents were turned over to Indian authorities in January 1997, and a criminal investigation is under way. So far, 14 people, including Gandhi, have been named as possible recipients.

Mr. Vajpayee's party, widely tipped to top the national elections but fall short of a clear majority, has made the scandal one of its major electoral planks.

The 112-year-old Congress, which dominated Indian politics for some four decades after 1947, is lagging behind the Hindu nationalists in poll surveys. But Sonia Gandhi's campaigns are expected to boost the party's waning appeal.

Analysis have warned that Sonia Gandhi could come under attack from the opposition, chiefly over the Bofors scandal, as she steps up her profile in the run up to the staggered elections.

The BJP had earlier targeted Gandhi, who acquired Indian citizenship in 1986, over her birth saying a "foreigner" had no right to be in domestic politics. The 51-year-old widow launched her political career with an election campaign last week.



SPACE CELEBRATION: Mir space station commander Anatoly Solovoyov (right), marking his 50th birthday in orbit Jan. 16, listens to a telegram of congratulations from Russian President Boris Yeltsin being read out by Mission Control. Looking on and applauding are flight engineer Pavel Vinogradov (left) and American astronaut David Wolf (Reuters photo)

Hun Sen advisor slams idea of peace talks with Cambodian resistance

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — A senior advisor to Cambodian strongman Hun Sen Friday blasted appeals for the government to negotiate with resistance forces loyal to deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh calling them "unacceptable interference."

Hor Namhong, Cambodia's ambassador to France, levelled the attack from Paris as leading dissident Sam Rainsy met Hun Sen to discuss the ceasefire and deliver a message to him regarding the issue from the Thai foreign minister.

"To force the royal government of Cambodia to agree to a ceasefire with the rebels in order to have a free and fair election is unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of Cambodia," Hor Namhong said in a statement released by the foreign ministry.

Cambodia "can never accept such a dictate from anyone," he said.

Hor Namhong, one of Hun Sen's most influential foreign policy advisors, said the powerful second prime minister's willingness to accept resistance soldiers back into the army should they stop fighting was a more than generous offer.

"They are committing a real armed uprising," he said. "In other states, these soldiers and officers would certainly face court marshals."

"To sign an agreement with these soldiers would mean purely and simply denying the existence of the state and (be) an encouragement to other armed uprisings and also (the) disintegration of Cambodia. No government can afford to take such a responsibility."

Soldiers loyal to the prince have been battling Phnom Penh's troops in Cambodia's north and northwest since July when Prince Ranariddh was effectively ousted in a weekend of fierce fighting in the capital.

Hun Sen has rejected several appeals for a ceasefire and peace talks and demanded the resistance unilaterally lay down their arms.

His conditions have been rejected by the resistance which has described them as "insulting."

Thursday Sam Rainsy, who has placed himself in the role of mediator between the two sides, returned to Cambodia from Europe and Thailand brimming with optimism for a ceasefire which he and others say is necessary for July's scheduled elections to be free and fair.

The dissident said he would deliver a message to Hun Sen from Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan that he believed would help affect an end to the fighting by the end of the month.

He would not reveal details of the message, but said it was "partly" the reason for his optimism.

Sam Rainsy and Hun Sen began a closed-door meeting at Hun Sen's country estate Friday afternoon but details of the talks were not immediately available.

Hor Namhong however, appeared to reject any foreign intervention with regard to the ceasefire and its potential effect on the elections.

He said the government had already demonstrated its commitment to free and fair elections and that preparations for the polls were going smoothly.

"It is more than enough," he said, adding a veiled shot at the Thais, whose recent elections have been marred by accusations of major fraud.

"Moreover, Cambodia has no lesson to learn from anyone, especially from countries where ballot-buying is common practice," Hor Namhong said.

Black magistrate to hear case against apartheid president

CAPE TOWN (AFP) — Black magistrate Victor Lugau will hear the case against apartheid's chief enforcer, ex-President Pieter Botha, when he appears next week on charges of snubbing South Africa's truth commission. Mr. Lugau's office said Friday.

Mr. Lugau is the senior district magistrate in Western Cape province — still a bastion of the National Party which long presided over apartheid disenfranchised blacks — and was appointed because of the prominence of the case, his office told AFP.

Mr. Botha was served with a court summons earlier this month after repeatedly refusing to testify to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on his role as former head of the now-defunct State Security Council.

The council is accused of masterminding a brutal reign of terror in South Africa's black townships in the 1980s and of planning cross-border strikes by South Africa's apartheid defence force.

The former head of state is due to appear in court in the Western Cape coastal town of George on Jan. 23.

Mr. Botha ruled South Africa from 1978 until 1989, and came to be hated and feared by blacks for his iron-fisted enforcement of the apartheid system of racial segregation, which earned him the nickname "Great Crocodile."

Under Mr. Botha's regime, blacks were prevented from rising to the rank of magistrate, though they were allowed to become prosecutors.

Mr. Lugau was on leave and not available for comment Friday, his office said. However, the Afrikaans-language Beeld newspaper quoted the magistrate as having said he had "no problem" hearing the case.

"All I'm concerned about is that justice prevails," he said. "Everyone is equal before the law. Mr. Botha is like any other citizen who has to appear in court."

Mr. Lugau told Beeld he planned to postpone the trial immediately to give him time to study all the documentation, and that next Friday's hearing will be a very brief affair.

On Jan. 7, Western Cape attorney general Frank Khan announced he had decided to prosecute Mr. Botha, who turned 82 last week, after the former president three times ignored subpoenas from the truth commission.

The TRC was set up by President Nelson Mandela's government to investigate political crimes by all parties in the apartheid years, has been empowered to grant some amnesties, and is due to make its final report next July.

Mr. Khan said Mr. Botha will be charged with failing to appear before the commission without giving sufficient reason, or alternatively, of obstructing the work of the commission.

The apartheid leader faces a maximum of two years' jail if found guilty, and/or an as yet unspecified fine.

Political parties, meanwhile are planning to stage protests outside the court in George during Friday's court appearance, Beeld said.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) said it will "definitely" stage a protest against Botha while white rightwingers, who claim his prosecution is blatant persecution of Afrikaners by black-led government, have warned they will also turn up in their "thousands."

A spokesman for Mr. Botha told the newspaper that the former president, the first apartheid-era head of state to face criminal charges, receives scores of telephone calls and faxes from supporters "daily."

Media interest in the case has been so great that a conference hall in the court building is to be used to accommodate journalists.

Romanian crisis moves towards early elections

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Romania appeared increasingly likely Friday to face early legislative elections after a split in the ruling coalition widened to breaking point, with the two main parties trading ultimatums.

President Emil Constantinescu was scheduled to make an address to the nation on television Saturday as the two-week-old crisis threatening Christian Democrat Premier Victor Ciorbea continued.

"If the social democrats (Democratic Party, DP) don't withdraw their demands for the premier to quit, it seems the only solution will be early elections," said Ion Diaconescu of Mr. Ciorbea's National Peasants' Party (NPP-CD).

Romania's governing coalition has been in turmoil since the end of December after Mr. Ciorbea sacked DP Transport Minister Traian Basescu for accusing the government of incompetence.

The NPP-CD, the main grouping in the ruling coalition, has issued a deadline of Monday for its junior partner, the DP, to reconsider its threat to pull out of the government if the premier is not replaced.

The DP earlier in the week said it had lost confidence in the premier, and would withdraw its support if a new cabinet and new premier are not appointed by March 31.

In a bid to resolve the crisis quickly, Mr. Ciorbea tendered his resignation Thursday evening. But his own party immediately rejected the offer, saying that "such a way out is not acceptable."

Meanwhile President Constantinescu, a Christian Democrat, was planning to "begin consultations this weekend with the coalition groups in a bid to defuse the crisis," said presidential aide Petru Berceanu.

But a senior official said that Mr. Ciorbea will almost certainly have to go.

"To salvage the honour of the two parties and at the same time save the coalition, Mr. Ciorbea would have to tender his resignation, irrevocably," said the official, who requested anonymity.

The Christian Democrats could then negotiate the formation of a new government with the social democrats, without giving the impression of having given in to their demands, he added.

The crisis between Mr. Ciorbea's party and its coalition partner has seriously hit the Romanian currency, the leu, which has lost more than four percent of its value against the dollar in a week.

Last Friday, the worst day for the currency since the crisis began, it stood at 8,360 lei officially, although some tourist change offices were trading at 9,000 lei to the greenback.

A senior official from the International Monetary Fund, Poul Thomsen, has postponed a planned visit to Romania next week to discuss the government's economic targets for 1998 until the political situation becomes clearer.

Romanian shares have also been rocked. "It was a terrible day. Everyone thought the government was going to fall and get rid of all their shares," said one dealer.

The National Association of Importers and Exporters has warned that the continuing crisis will severely hit Romania's trade balance.

Romania's main opposition party is insisting on early elections. The Social Democrats (PDSR), of reformed Communist former President Ion Iliescu say they are the only way to resolve a crisis and restore national confidence.

"We demand that early elections be organised, since the current coalition has shown it is useless," said Adrian Nastase, first vice-president of the PDSR, at a press conference this week.

Bluebell flower could help treat AIDS

LONDON (AFP) — Common woodland bluebells are packed with drugs that might one day provide new treatments for HIV infection and cancer, scientists at a government institute in Wales have found.

The humble flower, and its close relation, the harebell, contains biologically active compounds which it uses as a defence mechanism against animals and insect pests.

Two similar compounds extracted from species of legume found in Australia and the United States are now undergoing clinical trials with cancer and HIV patients in the United States.

Alison Watson, senior natural products chemist at the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) in Aberystwyth, Wales, said: "The bluebell produces compounds very, very similar to them. They are not identical, but similar enough to get us excited."

IGER Thursday announced an alliance with British pharmaceutical company Xenova Discovery Ltd, to build up a vast library of potentially money-spinning compounds extracted from plants.

Source of bird flu not from China, but Hong Kong — WHO expert

HONG KONG (AFP) — The source of the deadly bird flu, which has claimed six lives, could be in Hong Kong and not China, a World Health Organisation (WHO) expert said Friday.

Daniel Lavanchy, WHO expert working to trace the source of the bird flu, said on the first day of inspection tour of China that he currently did not believe the source of H5N1 virus was on the mainland.

"It looks like the source is in Hong Kong," Mr. Lavanchy told government-run radio here. "I might change my opinion in one week, but until today, I don't think the source is in China."

A 15-member WHO experts, epidemiologists and virologists from the WHO's Geneva headquarters and from the U.S.-based Centres for Disease Control arrived in Guangzhou Friday to look in at the situation in China.

Hong Kong's deadly bird flu was earlier believed to have come from China despite Beijing's repeated denials.

Mr. Lavanchy, spokesman for the group said: "Our work is to find out what is going on and analyse the situation, and how the system works."

The WHO experts are hoping to trace the source of an outbreak of the H5N1 virus, previously only found in chickens, in Hong Kong's human population.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture and Fisheries Department conducted another round of thorough cleansing and disinfection exercise of the two poultry wholesale markets to eradicate the H5N1 virus.

U.S. researchers, meanwhile, have unravelled the molecular structure of an avian flu virus retrieved from a three-year-old Hong Kong girl who died of the disease last May.

In a study to appear in Friday's edition of Science magazine, a team from the U.S. Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, said the isolated virus' protein shares characteristics with deadly influenza viruses such as the one that caused the 1918 global "Spanish flu" epidemic.

This type of study can help scientists determine if similar viruses are circulating in the human population and if the virus is a serious threat or "simply an isolated event," they said.

The study notes that other viruses taken from human victims of the avian flu are similar to the virus isolated in Atlanta.

A panic has led to the precautionary slaughter of all Hong Kong's 1.5 million chickens as well as a ban on imports of chickens from the mainland.

It was unlikely that the imports of chickens from the mainland would resume before the Chinese lunar new year starting Jan. 28.

There were six deaths reported so far in 18 confirmed cases and one suspected case. The condition of one 19-year-old woman has improved from poor to fair, while another 24-year-old woman is in critical condition.

Eleven others have recovered and been discharged from hospital.

No new cases were reported since the mass slaughter of chickens in Hong Kong late last month to stop the spread of the fatal H5N1 virus.

Teenagers charged with murder after watching horror movie

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — A third teenager has been charged in the murder of a 37-year-old woman whose children allegedly were inspired to kill her after viewing the movies "Scream" and "Scream 2," police said Thursday.

The woman's 16-year-old son and 14-year-old nephew were arrested Tuesday, shortly after Gina Castillo was found stabbed to death.

Wednesday another nephew, age 17, was apprehended and confessed to taking part in the bloody crime, according to Angie Pretwell, Los Angeles County deputy sheriff.

Investigators said the third suspect apparently helped to plan the attack, but was not present when it was carried out.

The youths apparently decided to kill Castillo after the two horror movies were broadcast on a local television channel, according to police detective Steve Sciaccia.

"They actually had planned it quite some time ago, but they were unable to carry out their plan because they were trying to raise money to actually buy the costumes that were used in the movie, including the voice changer and things of that nature," Mr. Sciaccia said.

"Scream 2" had a highly successful debut last month, hauling in \$39.2 million in its opening weekend alone, making it the most successful December release ever for a Hollywood movie.

In a statement, Dimension Films, which distributes "Scream" and "Scream 2" said it was "saddened by the tragic death of Gina Castillo."

"Our deepest condolences go out to her family and friends," the statement said.

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Realism means work

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein's separate meetings late last week with two groups representing influential Israeli and Jewish religious and political forces, though necessitated by several considerations, have one basic aim: to save the faltering peace process from collapse and put it back on track. The first group, Shas, is a vital member of the ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. On it depends the fate of the government, which can make or break the peace effort. Engaging it in a dialogue, therefore, is key to the future of this region as a whole, especially since this party believes in the peace process and this is a most crucial time to do the soul-searching necessary for success.

The same goes for the second group whose representatives the King met, The American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the most influential Israeli lobby group in the U.S. On its powerful organisation and work depend all Israeli governments for continued American support both economically and politically. The message of the Monarch to them was clear enough: If the Israeli and Palestinian sides succumb to the extremist factions within their constituencies and allow them to dictate their own agenda for their respective peoples, then we might as well forget about the survival of the peace process.

In this context it is easy to identify the extremists within the Palestinian ranks for they are the ones who sent suicide bombers to strike at the heart of Israel and lay the foundation for the rise to power by Israel's own hardliners, Netanyahu and people of his ilk obviously exemplify those political forces which are busy putting one hurdle after the other in the face of implementing Arab-Israeli accords in a solid effort to finish them off and preempt new ones from being reached and signed.

The Israeli expansionist and siege mentalities that put the highest premium on the acquisition by force of Arab lands are of course anathema to the intents and purposes of peace agreements with the Arab side. As the King aptly asked when addressing our visitors: "Shall we give in to the agenda of the radicals and short-sighted elements within the two sides or shall we contain this kind of leaders and peoples and marginalise their clout?"

It is obvious that at this particular time attention should be more focused on those in power in Israel because unlike their Palestinian hardline counterparts they are calling the shots as far as current deadlock is concerned.

In the absence of an effective Arab deterrence and direct, even forceful U.S. intervention, only internal pressures from within Israel and the Jewish diaspora can save the day.

Realism, which has been a hallmark of Jordan's pursuit of peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, dictates the need to activate such pressures and mobilise the efforts of all parties concerned to sustain the drive towards our noble goal.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i strongly criticised the Algerian government for failing to involve its armed forces in action to uproot the sources of terrorism and for its refusal to allow the world community to help end the massacres in the country. The terrorists in Algeria are committing their atrocities and slaughtering the innocent villagers with the hope of forcing the present government to give up and hand over power to them, said Fahed Faneh. The writer said that terrorists everywhere are concerned only with their own interests and they disregard the national or public interest as was clear in the terrorist attack against tourists in Egypt where these criminals succeeded in weakening the Egyptian economy by depriving the country of tourists. It is regrettable to see the Algerian government adamant in its position despite the horrible massacres which stand out as a stigma in mankind's history, said the writer. According to the writer, foreign powers can only help temporarily, but the end of the massacres can only come through a strong will on the part of the Algerian government and its armed forces which can liquidate the sources of terror.

RASHID HASSAN, a writer for Al Aswaq, described Israel's demand that the Palestine National Council scrap the Palestine national charter as a form of humiliation to the Palestinian people and the Palestine National Authority. The council has already deleted articles one, two, nine, 21 and 22 of the national charter which call for the destruction of Israel during its meeting in Gaza in April of 1996, noted the writer. But he said this measure seems insufficient for Israel which wants the council to introduce amendments to fill in the gaps left after the scrapping of those articles, amendments that would consecrate the Jewish state's occupation of Palestinian land. At the same time Israel wants to scrap the Oslo accord and it wants to approve of such move and to approve of the Jewish state's ongoing actions of Judaizing the Holy City of Jerusalem and of building settlements on Arab-owned land, the writer continued. He said the Palestinians should halt any further concessions to Netanyahu, they should enhance their national unity and should involve all factions in a united front against the common foe.

By John Gay Yoh

OF ALL Africa's many problems, brain draining is one of the issues which seems to have not triggered any attention of the majority of the region's leaders. In a recent World Bank report, it is estimated that an average of 23,000 qualified academic staff were emigrating from the black continent each year. Another disturbing recent estimate of Africa's brain drain says between 50,000 and 60,000 middle and high-level managers migrated from the continent between 1986 and 1996. The black continent is estimated to have lost 30 per cent of its highly skilled manpower, mainly to Europe, between 1960 and 1987. Moreover, between 1980 and 1996, it is estimated that 60 per cent of Ghanaian doctors trained at local universities, were working abroad; the Sudan lost 60 per cent of its doctors and dentists, 70 per cent of university lecturers, 30 per cent engineers and 40 per cent of surveyors went abroad, mainly to the Gulf region, in search for better life. Zimbabwe, which has been producing an average of 60 doctors a year, lost almost 90 per cent of these doctors to foreign countries.

In June last year, I had a chance to inquire about African brain drain problem from Richard A. Quinby, a Geneva-based International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Operation Officer in Ethiopia, who stated that many qualified Africans leave the continent to study abroad or work abroad, planning to study for few years and then return home. Mr. Quinby went on to say that "after years of working abroad in a new country, their plans to return home become increasingly vague. The chances of finding a job suitable with their newly acquired professional and academic achievements and the cost of moving their families and belongings to Africa, become growing obstacles to return."

I tend to agree with Mr. Quinby in arguing that, though ironic, the main route for Africa's brain drain is the scholarship programmes for study abroad, which are in fact primarily aimed at the development of the region's badly needed human resources. In one of its recent reports on brain drain evaluation in the continent, the Addis Ababa-based U.N. Economic Commissions for Africa (UNECA) says that more than half of the Africans who went to the United States of America to study physics and chemistry in the 1960s never went back to Africa. But it is noted that from the 1980s on, many technocrats from the continent migrated voluntarily to the U.S. because of lack of jobs at home.

Another aspect which is worth mentioning in this context is that, in some countries such as Somalia (before 1991) and Cote d'Ivoire, the output or the number of

graduates from national universities is not compatible with the needs of the country. This situation of course begs the following question: Why then do governments continue to adopt an education system that does not serve the requirements of Africa today? It is perhaps because these governments are responding to the wishes of their Western-trained middle class bureaucrats (much so in most Francophone west Africa), who normally send their children overseas to acquire good education and who in turn support educational systems better suited to the needs of the industrialised nations.

One must also add that the process of brain draining the continent is exhilarated by the fact that these qualified Africans have limited options when seeking asylum within Africa itself. Thus those who are forced to flee their countries, usually because of civil wars or political unrest, find that the better choice is to migrate to countries outside Africa. Frustrated by low pay, limited opportunities and lack of resources to carry out research and other academic work, Africa's professionals have been heading for richer countries where their talents can be better applied and of course better rewarded.

The first African immigrants were treated well in their host countries in Europe and easily adjusted to their new environment. The elimination of discrimination in the immigration policies in the 1960s and the 1970s of the U.S., Canada and Australia and the recruitment of labour to support expansion of manufacturing and services in northern Europe, which drew the best qualified immigrants from the developing countries, worked more to the advantage of these African professionals. Cheap labour as they turned out, African professional became an important working class to the Western industry, at least until late 1970s.

But all that open-arm welcoming of Africans and that cozy-fixing atmosphere suddenly changed in Europe, North America and the Pacific region. In fact, as of 1990, immigration laws were amended to slow down, not only the immigration of African political asylum seekers, but also the flow of professional and academic immigrants. In 1995 for example, 2,800 asylum seekers were deported from Britain and 21,300 applicants were denied asylum; in 1990, 17.5 per cent of applicants were refused asylum, by 1995, the figure was 78.9 per cent; out of 4,000 asylum seekers from Nigeria, 5 were granted asylum; out of 3,425 Ethiopian, Kenyan and Tanzanian asylum seekers in the same year, 59 were admitted; and in 1994, whereas 1,400 applicants sought asylum in Britain, 25,600 and 6,200 did so in Germany and France respectively, with Germany taking in 29 per cent of applicants, France 24 per cent and Britain 3.3 per

cent. In Italy, the number of legal immigrants was estimated in 1994 at 900,000 and illegal immigrants was estimated at about 500,000. The largest African immigrant population in Italy is the Senegalese community with 27,572, followed by the Somalis 14,972, Ghanaians 14,216, Ethiopians 13,000, in addition to Nigerians, Zairians and other black communities totalling between 500 and 1,000.

One must point out that there are lots of problems facing these immigrants all over Europe. They are poorly projected by the mass media and in most cases have become targets for relentless physical attacks by the indigenous citizens. In fact I read a report last year about an Ivorian who runs a food store in Rome who told reporters that people living above his shop poured water on his customers each time they come to buy things in the shop. So, it is not any longer a question of highly qualified or underpaid genius guys escaping misery of Africa and leave for better opportunities overseas, it has added up to be a problem of flow of a considerable segment of African population, who find itself in what later appeared to be unwelcoming environment.

Can anything be done to bring these immigrants and especially professionals back to Africa and thus stop the brain drain process? I doubt if it is safe to say that there is just one best efficient way to solve this problem. Yet, I think that one obvious and perhaps practical way of stopping the drain is to assist the residing qualified and experienced Africans at home: working towards retaining qualified nationals within the continent and assisting the return of African students who, without help, would be stranded in their countries of study. There are already many African students from over 20 African countries stranded since early 1990s in Russia (former Soviet Union republics), eastern Europe, Cuba and several Middle Eastern countries, especially Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

It is fair to say that the way African leaders behave will determine the outcome and the process of returning back all these stranded students and professionals. The current situation and the treatment of African immigrants overseas should be looked into seriously by the African decision-makers. The willingness of these political leaders to create an atmosphere that would encourage African professionals to stay and work in the continent will definitely have stimulating impact on the IOM efforts to return these brains back home.

The writer is associated researcher at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman.

Syria's anti-Jordan media campaign under writers' fire

REVIEWED BY
 ELIA NASRALLAH

COLUMNISTS and writers in the local daily newspapers expressed their disapproval of Syria's stands vis-a-vis Jordan and tackled domestic affairs, Iraq, Iran and the Middle East issue among other topics in their columns published in the past week.

Attacking Syria for its current media campaign against Jordan for sending an observer to attend the recent U.S.-Israeli-Turkish military exercises, a writer for Al Dustour said Syria's anti-Jordan stance comes at a time when Jordan was expressing support for Damascus' endeavours to regain its occupied territories and its water resources in the Golan. Oreib Rintawi said the Syrian campaign against Jordan diverted public attention in Syria and Jordan from the military exercises themselves to Syrian-Jordanian relations, and even those Jordanians who stood against the military exercises were shocked by Damascus' attitude towards Jordan. The writer reminded Damascus of its alliance with the U.S. and Iran in the 1991 and the eight-year Gulf wars respectively and said that Syria has maintained its normal relations with Turkey despite its apparent dismay over the exercises and has continued its enmity towards Iraq contrary to its claims that it seeks an end to the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

Riham Al Farra, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, said that by calling for military exercises of its forces with those of Russia and France in response to the Turkish-Israeli-U.S. exercises in the Mediterranean earlier this month, Damascus is trying to show its hostility towards the U.S., Damascus should have instead portrayed Israel as a destabilising force in the Middle East because it is seeking to collaborate with other nations in threatening Syria and the Arab World and should not have taken a retaliatory stand which could be interpreted as Syrian readiness to attack Israel as had been reported earlier in the Israeli press, according to the writer. The writer said that Syria realises that it cannot wage a successful war and that neither Russia nor France would come to its help should it get itself involved in conflict with the Jewish state. She said that Damascus should realise that by antagonising Jordan and leaning towards Iran and Egypt, it can by no means achieve any objective at a time when, unlike Israel and Turkey, it has no superpower to back its stand.

Sultan Al Hattab, a writer for Al Ra'i, related his own experience upon visiting a poor district in Zarqa, saying abject poverty he witnessed there was unimaginable. He said he had seen poor children roaming the streets and alleys in cold weather with worn-out clothes and empty stomachs begging passers-by and knocking on the doors for food. The writer said that Jordanians hear calls for social solidarity but seldom heed them, and very few of the rich extend real help to the

poor as is demanded by religious teachings, especially during the month of Ramadan. The writer said that it is regrettable to see people normally standing in long queues during the month of Ramadan at bakeries and stores to secure more than their actual food needs, with little or no thought of the needy. He said it is hoped that the wealthy benefactors and the Jordanian people at large who are in the practice of extending some help to the poor to increase their contributions not only during the holy month but rather all the year round so that social solidarity can be translated into practice.

Nicola Nasser, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm, said there is no need for Jordan to give safe haven for Iraqi opposition groups who take advantage of their presence here to commit actions against Iraq and harm Jordan's relations with that Arab country. Citing the attack on the Iraqi diplomat recently in Amman as an example, the writer said that it has been proved that the shooting was committed by Iraqis living in Jordan. While the government-controlled media and information services pursue their accusations of Jordan's opposition parties of being

THE WEEK IN PRINT

linked to foreign countries, the Jordanian government allows Iraqi opposition groups to collude with foreign powers against the Iraqi regime and continue to receive financial and other forms of backing for their anti-Iraq activities, charged the writer. He said during the two Gulf wars the Iraqi opposition stood by Iran and the U.S.-led coalition against Baghdad with disregard to their nation's interests. He asked what Jordan's stand would be if Baghdad decided to give shelter to Jordanian opposition groups bent on harming the Kingdom's interests?

A writer for Al Ra'i said that the Arabs in general and the Iraqis in particular were deceived by Russia's false promises that it would back Iraq at the U.N. Security Council in the face of the American threats against Baghdad. Russia has promised Baghdad that it would take immediate steps to end the U.N.-imposed embargo on the Iraqi people but has defaulted to the dismay of the Arab masses and Baghdad, according to Hosni Ayesah. Likewise Baghdad had counted on China and France to come to its help vis-a-vis the U.S., but Iraq and every one else was surprised to see these two nations succumbing to Washington's dictates at the Security Council, said the writer.

In addition, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have been culling for an end to the embargo on Iraqi people and it was thought they would take some action to back their words with deeds during the recent Gulf summit meeting, but it turned out that all the Gulf countries, including these two states, declared that while they open their arms to welcome Iran for reconciliation talks with its Arab neighbours they closed the door in the face of Iraq.

Yasser Zaateh, a writer for Al Dustour, said that the Iranian president's call for an open dialogue with the American people with the hope of improving Iranian-U.S. relations is illogical. He said Khatami admitted in an interview with the CNN that the U.S. foreign policies are not made in Washington but rather in Tel Aviv and therefore it is illogical to see the U.S. changing its stand towards Iran unless the latter improved its ties with the Jewish state. The writer said the Zionist lobby has a great influence on the U.S. administration and Congress, and only decisions that serve the interests of the Jewish state are passed there. Since it is clear that the Americans are not likely to change their present policies towards Tehran except with Tel Aviv's approval, there can be no hope for Khatami's suggested dialogue, said the writer. It is better for Tehran, he added, to pursue the implementation of the resolutions taken at the Tehran summit last month than try its hand in a losing gamble with the U.S.

Tayseer Al Zibri, a writer for Al Ra'i, said that the U.S. administration's declaration towards the end of last month that it fully understands Israel's requirements for security and its present procrastination over the implementation of the Oslo agreements makes the projected Arafat-Clinton meeting in Washington pointless. If the Palestinian National Authority gears its efforts solely towards ensuring Israel's security 24 hours a day all the year round, it cannot guarantee that security at all and the U.S. administration realises this fact, said the writer. Furthermore the U.S. is duty bound to make sure that the Israelis redeploy their forces in the occupied Arab lands under the Oslo accord which was endorsed by Clinton himself, added the writer. He said under that accord Israel ought to comply with the U.N. resolutions and exchange land-for-peace. Only through implementing these agreements, said the writer, can the security of the Jewish state be guaranteed.

LETTERS

Environment-friendly plant

To the Editor:

I READ WITH interest Lolia Keilani's story on the issue of alleged pollution caused by the cement plant in Fuheis on Jan. 14, 1998.

However, I wish the writer could take out little time to visit the plant and find for herself how "accurate" such allegations may be.

This plant has developed a great deal. It has benefited from the impressive progress in the cement industry over the last few years. In many cases, especially in European countries, this industry has become environmentally friendly to a degree that it rids the society from domestic, medical and industrial waste.

Despite such progress, some would not believe that an industry and a plant, especially a Jordanian one in Fuheis, could take concrete and successful measures to upgrade its production units and improve its environmental performance to meet well-established international standards governing this industry.

Those steps, which cost tens of millions of dollars, have been based on the company's commitment towards the preservation of clean and sustainable environment and on the work of a dedicated and well-trained staff.

As we take pride in what we have achieved in recent years, we will be more than happy to receive you at our plant so you may "inspect" the situation on the ground.

Finally, we will be grateful if Ms. Keilani would reveal to us a list of "European Contractors" who are negotiating with the company to supply them with cement, and the text of the "EU decision to ban cement production" and when such decision "goes into effect."

Eng. Ibrahim Gammaz,
 Director
 Department of the Environment.

For a free press

To the Editor:

IF THE Jordan Press Association (JPA) wishes to promote a fair and free press in the Kingdom, then it's about time the JPA practises what it preaches.

Its self-righteous demands for press freedom do not amount to much when this association attacks fellow journalists. ("Press Association condemns Journalists' Visit to Israel as 'A Form of Normalisation'" Jordan Times, Jan. 6, 1998).

What is a journalist if not an investigator and, at times even, a provocateur? Moreover, the Kingdom's journalists should be free to carry out their professional calling anywhere, including Israel.

The JPA should perform a more responsible function: Promote a truly fair and free press, and forego the political demagoguery.

Rex Preston Stoner,
 Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Trading at AFM rises by 42 per cent in '97 but volume is still below the '92-'95 levels

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Economic measures which aimed at encouraging local and foreign investments have increased the turnover of share trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) by 42 per cent last year, Jordan Securities Commission (JSC) Director General Michel Marto told a press conference Thursday.

Dr. Marto said the turnover amounted to JD355 million in 1997, a 42.6 per cent increase over the JD249 million recorded in 1996.

A total of 191 million shares were traded last year, a 17.2 per cent increase over the 163 million shares traded in 1996, Dr. Marto said.

The JSC chief, a former deputy governor of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ), pointed out that the general price index rose by 10.3 per cent, jumping from 153.5 points at the end of 1996 to 169.24 points at the end of last year.

Dr. Marto said the laws that were enacted in the past year, such as the Companies Law, the Securities Law and the Investment Promotion Law to attract non-Jordanian investments, have enhanced the AFM activities in 1997.

"These legislations consolidated the stability of the national economy, enhanced the openness to

foreign markets and paved the way for more investments," Dr. Marto told journalists to announce the AFM 1997 results.

"But despite these results, the AFM performance is still below the level that was recorded between 1992-95," Dr. Marto said.

"This was mainly due to the political developments in the region, including the stalemate in the peace process and the crisis in Iraq," Dr. Marto explained.

He indicated that the value of shares that were bought by non-Jordanian investors amounted to JD100 million compared with JD26 million in 1996. Sales by those investors in the past year amounted to JD44 million compared with JD18 million in 1996.

"As a result of this, the net investments by non-Jordanian investors has amounted to JD57 million in the past year compared to JD9 million in the previous year," said Dr. Marto adding that the 1998-99 foreign investments are expected to range between JD100 to JD150 million.

The AFM head revealed that the bulk of foreign investments came from non-Arab investors who accounted for 70.2 per cent of the net foreign investments in the stock market. Arab investments amounted to only 29.8 per cent.

"Removing the obstacles that were imposed against foreign investments led to

this result," Dr. Marto stressed.

Dr. Marto said the "slowness" of the privatisation process in the Kingdom, especially in the telecommunication sector was among the reasons behind foreign investors being hesitant to come to Jordan.

"We heard that the privatisation of this sector will be in force by March 1997. Then it was postponed to June then it was postponed again and until now it has not been implemented. This had delayed several hundred millions of foreign investments in this sector," Dr. Marto said.

He played down the fears of opposition parties and some "politicians" in the country of the outcome of this process and emphasised that there is no danger because of this process. "We are now working on increasing the transparency at the AFM and providing the investors with a wider information as such measures would attract more and more local and foreign investors to the market," said Dr. Marto.

He added that by September, the computerisation of the AFM activities would be introduced with the help of the French government. "The market will greatly improve when the AFM's new regulations will be enacted and modern technology introduced," said Dr. Marto.

"Many investors com-

plain that they do not get enough information about the market activities and the standings of the companies listed at the market," he said.

He emphasised that the new measures that will regulate the AFM activities will enable brokers and investors alike to obtain necessary information about the market's activities.

"The new system would enable the dealers, investors and brokers to obtain all information needed for their work and would encourage thousands of reluctant individuals to enter the market," said Dr. Marto.

The JSC chief revealed that the market value of bonds decreased from JD5.1 million in 1996 to JD2 million in 1997.

"The bonds market is still in the beginning stage compared with international bond markets and that means that more has to be done to develop it," Dr. Marto said.

"This market is very important because it makes financing available to local firms at lesser cost. We will adopt the necessary measures to enhance its activities," he added.

He indicated that the volume of shares at the primary market jumped from JD188 million in 1996 to JD335 million in last year for a 78.2 per cent increase. Dr. Marto said that among

the new developments at the AFM last year was the issuance of the first Jordanian Global Depository Receipt (GDRs) for the Arab Potash Company. The GDRs were "fully" sold in the London market.

"This is a clear indication of the reputation which some of our companies enjoy abroad," said Dr. Marto.

He added that another development, was the issuance of \$100 million sovereign bonds by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company.

Dr. Marto ruled out any negative effects on the AFM from what happened in the Asian market. He stressed that the activities of investors in the market were "under surveillance."

"The speculators responsible for what happened in Asian markets will not come to Jordan because we are still a small market. These speculators are looking for markets where they can enter and leave the market freely," said Dr. Marto.

The JSC head indicated that the AFM has recorded trading activities by 112 foreign investment funds in 1997. Of this number, 25 were Arab funds and 87 were non-Arab funds.

The Arab funds were six Palestinians, six Kuwaitis, four Omanis, three Saudis, three Emiratis, two Bahrainis, and one Egyptian.

Non-Arab funds were from the U.S., France, Lux-

embourg, Canada, Britain, Bahamas, Switzerland, Mauritius, Ireland, Holland, Scotland, South Korea, Italy, Cyprus and Japan.

"All of the non-Arab funds were companies, banks or funds affiliated with well-known banks. They were clean and trustworthy," said Dr. Marto adding that "none of these funds was Israeli."

JSC deputy Director General Jalil Tarif said that in order to enhance the institutional investors' presence in the market, the AFM has resorted to introduce new changes for dealing in mutual funds in order to direct the individual investors to these funds.

Mr. Tarif said that another step to enhance the institutional investors was to give wider role to provident funds in the market. Such a role depends on the government to amend legislations which are expected to be approved soon.

"Under these changes, individual investments would be based on institutional bases," said Mr. Tarif.

Mr. Tarif admitted that the lack of confidence in the market exists due to "political reasons, especially the progress in the peace process and the crisis in Iraq." But he stressed that the present fiscal policy of the Kingdom should give more confidence to the investors.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) There's a talent you're practising right now. You're going over and over the routine, trying to get it down flawlessly. The more you practice, the more likely that is. You may think you'll never get there, but you should start results by tomorrow. That might seem like an eternity, but it won't be. Hang in there.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Not only does love look good, but games of chance are also enhanced. You have to be encouraged to take a risk, however, since that's not something you normally do. Your luck is really marvelous right now, so it's a waste not to use it. That's especially true with romance first thing this morning.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Have a conversation with someone you love this morning. It will be easier to discuss an impending purchase. You'll have to put your money together to buy it. Or you could fix up an old item instead. That would be a big savings, and take off some of the stress you've been anticipating.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You'll retain written information much better than usual. You've probably got an entire shelf full of cookbooks. If you could live the life you love, you'd do nothing but read them all evening. Well, what's stopping you? If it's another chore that needs to get done, race around and finish it.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Again, there's money coming in. It's not from the lottery. It's from work you've done. There's still more to be accomplished, so don't lighten up yet. If you can keep full steam on for another few hours, you'll have the weekend to relax. Actually, you may want to take a couple of things home with you this weekend, too.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You are looking great. The moon in your sign brings confidence and power, and calms you down a little. You've got everything scheduled and figured out, and things are going along according to your plans. Make sure you schedule in plenty of time for love tonight, and tomorrow as well.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're under pressure, possibly of your own making. You want to do something perfectly, and you're not sure how. There's also quite a bit of work involved. It would be nice if it were easier, but it wouldn't be quite as satisfying once you win. Put in the effort. The rewards should make it all worthwhile.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get together with an old friend this morning. You support each other in tackling big projects. You motivate each other to try things more difficult than either of you have ever done before. Use that motivation in a meeting this afternoon. Once you get this group whipped into shape, you'll be able to accomplish great things.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're going to have to meet difficult standards again. This is a good habit to get into. It's funny that what you like the least is often the key to your success. In your case, it's getting organized and remembering things. It's not easy for a Sagittarius, but once you get that wired, everything else falls into place.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may have a brilliant insight that leads you to your greatest destiny. A suggestion could come from a person far away. It's an idea you'd thought about briefly. When you hear it again, you'll recognise it. Do something to make it happen. Every little step in the right direction counts.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Money continues to be a major theme. You need to sort it, file it, add it, subtract it and gather in what others owe you; but most important, you need to pay the bills. This is not your favourite chore, but it's important that you do it now. You're going to have a lot more interesting things to do over the weekend.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You might be facing something confronting, but you've got good advice from your friends and partner. Don't feel like you have to rush into anything. It'll be best to take things carefully. Your best time for romance is early in the morning. If you're with the right person then, the rest of the day will go better.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

IEA revises down '98 world oil demand due to Asian crisis

PARIS (AFP) — The International Energy Agency (IEA) Thursday revised down its estimate of world oil demand for 1998 to 75.3 million barrels a day from 75.6 million forecast last month.

"The call has been reduced for the three

remaining quarters of 1998 in order to reflect adjustments for the impact of the Asian economic difficulties," the International Energy Agency (IEA) said in its monthly oil market report.

Asian oil demand, excluding China, is now

forecast to average 9.4 million barrels a day in 1998, down from a forecast of 9.6 million a month ago.

But the IEA held its forecast for Chinese demand steady at an average of 4.2 million barrels a day for 1998.

"Asian product prices plunged" in December "as the region's economic problems reinforced bearish sentiment in an already oversupplied product market," the IEA said.

December demand was also "slightly lower than

expected as a result of mild winter weather," although supply also increased by less than expected.

The IEA had said in December that world oil demand would rise by 2.4 per cent in 1998 to 75.6 million barrels a day from 73.8 million in 1997.

Demand for OPEC oil in 1998 is now forecast at an average 26.2 million barrels a day, down from a December forecast of 26.3 million barrels and substantially less than the new output ceiling of 27.5 mil-

lion barrels agreed in early December by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

The IEA noted that spot crude oil prices had fallen by more than \$4 a barrel in December from November levels, "when a host of bearish news combined to depress market sentiment."

This could pose a problem for the OPEC producers, as according to the Middle East Economic Survey OPEC oil was selling for an average \$15.14 a barrel at the end of last week, compared with \$16.89 in December.

OPEC has an official target price for oil of \$21 a barrel, and Kuwait Energy Minister Issa Mohammed Al Mazidi said after the December OPEC meeting that he expected 1998 oil

prices to range between \$19 and \$25 a barrel.

Oil producers now face the prospect of lower oil prices coupled with a far smaller increase in demand than expected this year.

Oil prices fell sharply at the beginning of this month on news that Iraq had reached agreement to resume exports under its oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

Brent crude for February delivery fell to \$15.10 a barrel in early trading in London on Monday, its lowest level since April 1994.

It had recovered slightly to \$15.48 a barrel by the end of Wednesday on renewed Iraq tension, but this is still far below the high point of \$21 a barrel in October.

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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

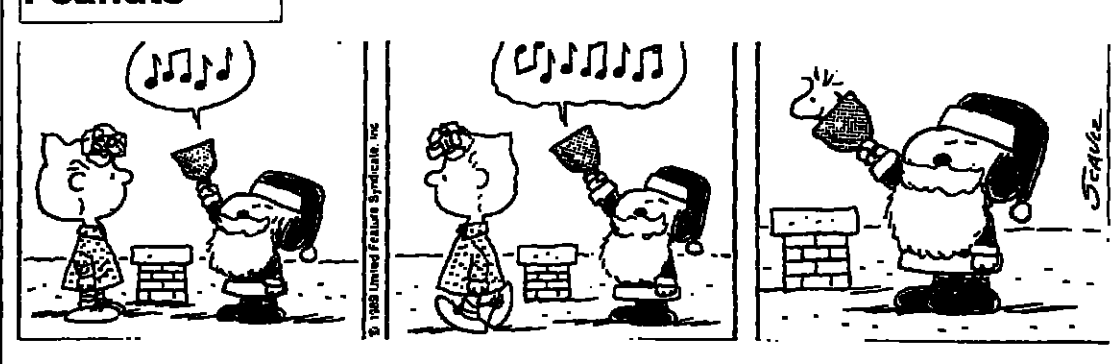
1 Across
1 Baylor U. city
2 Hussein of Iraq
3 Wind dir.
4 Ballplayer
5 Moises
6 Go by
7 Div.
8 Landmark
9 Ms. Gardner
10 Examine by touch
11 Young hoater
12 Baudouin or pyrite
13 Completely rational
14 Pamper
15 Raccoon's kin
16 "Waiting for Lefty" dramatist
17 St. Petersburg landmark
18 Permit
19 Minute amounts
20 Narrow inlet
21 London landmark
22 Brooklyn's county
23 In plain view
24 First female marathon Gold Medalist
25 oblige
26 Big galoot
27 Paste-up artist
28 "The Bald Soprano"
29 playwright
30 Jordan's nickname
31 Amsterdam landmark
32 Charged particle
33 Scarlett's plantation
34 Precursor of the CIA
35 Pater
36 "Nana" star

4 Down
1 Distant settlement
2 Six-line poem
3 vera
4 Actor Duryea
5 Printer abbr.
6 Botanist Gray
7 "The Consul"
8 Past prime, breadwise
9 Break off
10 Raise spirits
11 Rabbits' kin
12 Tiny amount
13 Transparent material
14 Navigational system
15 Beats it
16 Coke or Pepsi
17 Poeticizes
18 Son of Adam
19 Gardeners, at times
20 Fiss's river
21 Canon title role
22 Earth's rotation direction
23 French islands

40 Sleeper spy
41 Went past
42 Actor Reeves
43 Invas, like bugs
44 OB Esaiason
45 March of mysteries
46 Medleys

48 Sun's too much
49 Man, e.g.
50 Ticket datum
51 Kfir's alternative
52 Middle Eastern nation
53 Jirne
54 Middle sch.
55 DIY buy

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I love Christmas. It's the only day of the year that nobody can scold me for being childish!"

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CILLA
SCAIB
UNMOLC
DORMIB

Answer: TO

Yesterday's Jumble: PRUNE LYRIC INHALE MAKEUP
Answer: What the overnight comedian gave his audience - A PAUNCH LINE

Busin
A rev
less the tot
transport
REUTE
The
Major Curre
Currency USD
US Dollar 1.4304
Jordan Dinar 0.2946
Saudi Riyal 0.2946
Euro Dinar 2.65
Qatar Dinar 0.2747
Kuwait Dinar 3.2380
Yemen Dinar 2.7273
Egyptian Pound 0.65
Egypt 0.2927

Energy
Unit Last Previous
Oil 14.80 14.84
Natural Gas 14.30 14.32
Coal 14.30 14.34
Lignite 13.37 13.00
Oil 140.00 137.00

Metal Prices
Metal Bid
Gold (oz's) 330.1
Silver (oz's) 5.85
Platinum (oz's) 175
Copper (oz's) 1521
Nickel (oz's) 1715
Zinc (oz's) 1154
Lead (oz's) 822
Tin (oz's) 5580

Commodity Energy
Commodity (cents) L
Coffee (Arabica) 173
Coffee (Robusta) 28
Sugar (No. 11) 29
Wheat (No. 1) 1.1
Wheat (No. 2) 1.1
Wheat (No. 3) 1.1
Wheat (No. 4) 1.1
Wheat (No. 5) 1.1
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Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Unless the tourism sector register higher growth, tourist transport companies will continue to lose — study

**** A STUDY** conducted recently by the Ministry of Tourism shows that the new charges adopted by the coalition of tourism transport companies will not abolish the losses of the three firms (JETT, Alpha and Petra) but may reduce the loss, the JETT (Jordan Express Tourism Transport) Company Chairman Adnan Mufti said. "The companies will continue to lose even after introducing the new rates agreed among the three companies," Mr. Mufti stressed.

He indicated that the study concludes that the only salvation for the firms and their return to profitability depend upon the expected growth in tourism but on condition that no more tourist buses enter the market. Mr. Mufti said that there was a surplus of 90 buses during the '97 Christmas period which is considered as a high season for tourism sector.

Mr. Mufti indicated that having an idle fleet of 90 buses was due to the decline in the number of tourist groups that visited the Kingdom during the mentioned period by 40 per cent below the 1996 level. He attributed the drop in the number of tourists to the troubled peace process and the events that took place in the region last year.

The JETT chief said that around 350,000 tourists arrived in groups last year noting that tourist groups, not individual tourists, are the ones who seek the services of bus operators. He singled the month of October of last year as the period during which the number of tourists dropped by 25 per cent compared to the same month of 1996.

Mr. Mufti stressed that the new fares agreed by coalition of the three tourist transport companies, were not the reason for the drop in the number of tourists. He explained that the cost of tourist transport represents only 25 per cent of the total cost of a tourism package. Noting that the actual cost was in fact 15 per cent, Mr. Mufti calculated that the "higher" charges raised the cost of a tourism package by no more than 3.5 per cent. "Most of this increase (amount) is deducted from the profits of travel and tour agents and does not represent any extra cost on the tourism package," he elaborated.

According to the JETT chairman, the tourist transport companies posted JD285,971 operational losses during the first half of 1997, when general and administrative expenditures were taken into consideration the combined loss of the three companies amounted to JD1,272,236 (Al Dustour).

Shares of industrial companies top trading at AFM

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The industrial sector has grabbed the lion's share of the last week's turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM), the weekly bulletin of the stock exchange indicated Friday.

The AFM bulletin showed that the total turnover during the past week increased by 10.3 per cent as it totalled JD6.4 million compared with JD5.8 million in the previous week.

The report said that 1,671 contracts were concluded covering 3.7 million shares. Daily turnover amounted to JD1.6 million compared with JD1.1 million a week ago.

Naim Naqeeb, a broker at the stock market, said the bulk of the trading went to the industrial sector which, at JD3.8 million, accounted for 59.6 per cent of the total turnover.

Mr. Naqeeb told the Jordan Times that most of the dealings focused

on the pharmaceutical industry, especially the Arab Pharmaceutical Company, and the Intermediate Petrochemicals Company.

"Most of the dealers expected the industrial firms would achieve good results in 1997 and, as such, many contracts were recorded in the shares of these firms," said Mr. Naqeeb.

He added that the banking sector came second but with no major contracts in the past week's trading.

The weekly bulletin showed that banking sector got JD1.4 million, or 22.61 per cent from the total turnover followed by the services sector with JD1.07 million, or 16.8 per cent, and the insurance sector with JD60,000 or 0.94 per cent.

He indicated that the for the first time in the AFM's history, no turnover was recorded in a single day when the snow that hit the country on Monday prevented most of the dealers and brokers to reach the

stock market. "AFM activities were paralysed on that day," he said.

The bulletin said the general share index has decreased to 166.8 point in the past week down from 167.9 point a week ago.

The report said that out of 81 firms that changed hands, 29 firms recorded increase in prices, 30 firms recorded decreases and 22 recorded no change in its prices.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates Prices as at 16/01/98 21:22									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
US Dollar	100	1.4319	0.8119	1.4370	123.13	1.4388	1803.08	2.0883	1.1384
DE Mark	100	0.8409	0.5239	0.8377	70.48	0.7857	963.86	1.1273	3.3497
GB Sterling	100	1.4343	0.8635	1.4400	210.38	2.3488	2848.36	3.3748	10.0275
Swiss Franc	100	0.8680	0.5239	0.8684	86.21	0.8688	1203.16	127.79	4.0061
JP Yen	100	0.0077	1.4178	0.4736	1.1888	1.1115	15.36	108.08	4.7480
CA Dollar	100	0.6885	1.2741	0.6333	1.0324	1.11	1282.10	1.4963	4.2837
IT Lira	100	0.0006	1.0163	0.3382	0.0830	1298.21	0.7862	11.44	3.4017
SE Krona	100	0.4842	0.8808	0.2963	72.83	0.2947	0.8865	873.44	2.8718
FR Franc	100	0.1630	0.2984	0.0807	24.3888	21.02	0.2340	33.82	33.8200

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
US Dollar	100	0.7080	3.3508	0.3770	3.6469	0.3060	3.6728	1827.00	3.4008
Jordan Dinar	100	0.2688	0.1880	0.2688	0.8347	0.8347	0.8347	2183.74	4.8038
Saudi Riyal	100	2.88	1.8808	0.9485	0.86	0.8117	8.74	4050.40	0.2018
Bahrain Dinar	100	0.2747	0.1947	1.0302	0.0840	1.01	418.41	0.3382	0.3382
Qatar Dinar	100	3.2880	2.3170	12.2888	1.2320	11.80	12.00	4880.20	0.3382
Kuwait Dinar	100	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.0840	0.0840	0.0840	416.78	0.3382
Emirate Dinar	100	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.0840	0.0840	0.0840	416.78	0.3382
Lebanese L1000	100	0.08	0.4843	2.4882	0.2488	2.2843	2.2843	2.2843	2.2843
Egyptian	100	0.2837	0.2082	1.1015	0.1107	1.0883	0.0889	1.0788	448.48

Energy									
Oil	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
Brent	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80
WTI	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80
Bonny	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80
Dubai	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80
UL Gas	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80	14.80

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
SA Riyal	100	0.2688	0.1880	0.2688	0.8347	0.8347	0.8347	2183.74	4.8038
AE Dirham	100	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.0840	0.0840	0.0840	416.78	0.3382
KW Dinar	100	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.0840	0.0840	0.0840	416.78	0.3382
BH Dinar	100	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	0.0840	0.0840	0.0840	416.78	0.3382
CY Pound	100	1.2896	3.4042	1.1373	2.7828	2.7828	2.7828	2.7828	2.7828

Currency Deposit Rates (Bld)									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
USD	100	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80	5.80
GBP	100	7.34	7.34	7.34	7.34	7.34	7.34	7.34	7.34
JPY	100	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38
DEM	100	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
FRF	100	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
CHF	100	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09
ITL	100	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.18	6.18

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	% Change	High	Low	Open	Close	Volume	Turnover
New York	7790.17	98.4	1.28	7798.55	7786.01	7791.77	7791.77	100.0	100.0
DOW JONES	864.3	13.67	1.58	864.72	860.73	860.73	860.73	100.0	100.0
FT-SE 100	5263.1	97.3	1.88	5277.2	5169.7	5169.7	5169.7	100.0	100.0
Nikkei 225	16048.45	824.47	5.11	16082.5	15653.1	15653.1	15653.1	100.0	100.0
CAC 40	2976.08	43.34	1.48	2978.85	2952.49	2952.49	2952.49	100.0	100.0
DAX	4184.48	38.12	0.91	4188.71	4172.86	4172.86	4172.86	100.0	100.0

Energy									
Commodity	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
Coffee (c/lbs)	173.33	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	1673	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	296.1	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	110	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	24.83	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	180	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	0	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	400	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot	Spot

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
US Dollar	100	0.7080	3.3508	0.3770	3.6469	0.3060	3.6728	1827.00	3.4008
GB Sterling	100	1.4343	0.8635	1.4400	210.38	2.3488	2848.36	3.3748	10.0275
DE Mark	100	0.8409	0.5239	0.8377	70.48	0.7857	963.86	1.1273	3.3497
FR Franc	100	0.1630	0.2984	0.0807	24.3888	21.02	0.2340	33.82	33.8200
JP Yen	100	0.0077	1.4178	0.4736	1.1888	1.1115	15.36	108.08	4.7480
CA Dollar	100	0.6885	1.2741	0.6333	1.0324	1.11	1282.10	1.4963	4.2837
IT Lira	100	0.0006	1.0163	0.3382	0.0830	1298.21	0.7862	11.44	3.4017
SE Krona	100	0.4842	0.8808	0.2963	72.83	0.2947	0.8865	873.44	2.8718
Source: Central Bank of Jordan									

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET																			
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - BUREAU																			
TELEPHONE: 667171 / 667179																			
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (10/01/1998 - 16/01/1998)																			
WEEKLY REPORT																			
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS				
IGN	LOW																		
129.000	320.000	ARAB BANK	14.9	1.24	31	1580	511740	324.00	324.00	323.50	323.75	-.35	323.886	.076	4				
1.810	1.750	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	-	0.00	46	131000	249321	1.81	1.84	1.80	1.80	-.01	1.820	.328	4				
2.000	1.600	BANK OF JORDAN	-	0.00	37	78718	127803	1.64	1.65	1.60	1.60	-.06	1.622	.500	3				
1.300	1.150	WID. EAST INV. BK.	45.7	0.00	13	22000	22483	1.13	1.11	1.00	1.00	-.17	1.076	.218	4				
1.740	1.450	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	6.2	4.18	31	67000	111680	1.70	1.70	1.69	1.70	-.01	1.700	.372	3				
5.350	5.250	THE HOUSING BK.	15.5	3.73	18	26125	132610	5.25	5.24	5.20	5.20	-.05	5.203	.105	3				
2.140	1.400	JOR. UNIV. BANK	10.2	0.00	21	48255	96513	2.03	2.04	1.99	2.00	-.03	2.000	.322	3				
.490	.670	JOR. GULF BANK	10.3	0.00	21	19850	13202	.64	.68	.67	.67	-.01	.670	.099	1				
2.740	2.740	ARAB JOR. INV. BK.	21.7	0.00	1	10000	26400	2.74	2.96	2.96	2.96	-.02	2.960	.067	1				
2.910	2.750	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	12.1	4.03	52	16124	38248	2.30	2.48	2.30	2.38	-.08	2.373	.088	4				
2.370	2.370	JOR. UN. SAV. INV.	160.1	0.00	3	2250	2936	1.67	1.68	1.08	1.08	-.01	1.080	.012	1				
2.410	2.100	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK	14.8	0.00	6	31211	71785	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.30	-	2.300	.312	2				
2.350	2.350	JOR. INV. FIN. BANK/HEM	-	0.00	3	15555	35777	2.35	2.30	2.30	2.30	+.05	2.300	.313	1				
.920	.870	IFIT AL-HAL (BRIYAT)	.5	17.24	1	250	218	.88	.87	.87	.87	-.01	.872	.031	1				
					283	475547	1667049	INDEX NUMBER : 236.94			CHANGE : 0.207								
BANKS SECTOR																			
2.890	1.700	JORDAN INSURANCE	31.8	5.45	2	20000	55000	2.89	2.75	2.75	2.75	-.14	2.750	.080	1				
2.350	2.350	GENERAL ARAB INSUR.	22.8	4.35	1	1350	3105	2.35	2.30	2.30	2.30	-.05	2.300	.040	1				
2.640	1.950	JOR. FIDUCIARY DEV.	5.8	7.35	4	1750	3570	2.05	2.04	2.04	2.04	-.01	2.040	.080	1				
					7	23100	61875	INDEX NUMBER : 121.06			CHANGE : 1.1787								
INSURANCE SECTOR																			
1.940	1.910	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.15	22	32561	43440	1.93	1.91	1.92	1.94	+.01	1.924	.151	4				
8.800	8.400	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	12.2	1.20	4	15400	123368	8.80	8.80	8.80	8.80	-.32	8.811	.308	2				
3.550	1.350	NIKEN MINERALS	17.4	4.52	4	600	2104	3.38	3.45	3.45	3.45	+.07	3.510	.515	2				
5.200	6.070	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	15.0	4.88	7	2000	993	4.94	4.94	4.89	4.89	-.05	4.915	.002	1				
1.090	1.000	NATL. PORTFOLIO	-	0.00	14	2450	3547	1.04	1.05	1.01	1.01	-.01	1.034	.069	3				
.550	.410	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	27.1	0.00	4	2250	1008	.41	.45	.43	.45	+.04	.448	.066	3				
1.290	1.210	WID. EAST HOTELS	18.3	0.00	2	2100	2532	1.25	1.22	1.22	1.20	-.05	1.206	.041	2				
4.000	1.390	JOR. INVEST. BROKERS	10.3	0.00	16	8125	21973	3.20	3.16	3.00	3.04	-.04	3.035	.080	4				
.940	.940	SARAK EDUCATION	-	0.00	3	4500	1425	.95	.95	.95	.95	-	.950	.033	1				
1.720	1.680	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.51	11	5650	9497	1.69	1.69	1.68	1.69	-	1.681	.113	2				
.720	.670	UNION LABOR DEV.	-	0.00	2	3200	2170	.71	.70	.70	.70	-.01	.700	.062	1				
					86	64958	222077	INDEX NUMBER : 116.79			CHANGE : 0.185								
SERVICES SECTOR																			
3.040	2.750	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.1	3.65	3	2500	2900	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	-	1.160	.089	2				
6.210	6.000	AJAS POTASH CO.	14.1	3.30	12	12500	547921	1647340	3.04	3.15	3.02	3.01	-.03	3.043	.906	4			
10.700	10.330	JOR. PETRO. REFINERY	10.2	8.60	40	3365	35461	10.47	10.58	10.45	10.58	+.20	10.529	.015	3				
1.430	1.430	INDUSTRIAL COMM. GR.	-	0.00	3	788	1095	1.41	1.39	1.39	1.39	-.02	1.390	.016	1				
4.420	4.420	JOR. PHARM. MARK.	11.8	4.65	180	173820	753000	4.42	4.42	4.42	4.44	+.22	4.440	2.933	4				
4.420	4.420	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.8	4.31	5	58000	22300	4.42	4.64	4.64	4.64	+.22	4.640	2.000	1				
2.300	2.300	JORDAN DAIRY	9.5	8.64	2	250	991	2.80	2.83	2.83	2.83	+.03	2.831	.020	1				
1.240	1.240	JOR. PETRO. REFINCT.	10.0	6.20	7	64000	82560	1.29	1.29	1.29	1.29	-	1.290	.581	3				
5.750	5.400	DAR ALDAMA DR. INV.	14.0	4.39	12	16834	95171	5.62	5.70	5.65	5.70	+.08	5.655	.081	1				
11.800	11.240	ARAB-ALB. IND.-	5.4	10.42	15	9423	4615	.45	.46	.45	.46	+.01	.459	.282	4				
.470	.440	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	4	500	380	.80	.74	.76	.76	-.04	.760	.014	1				
.800	.800	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	23.2	0.00	6	35000	38500	.70	.70	.70	.70	-	.700	.075	3				
.700	.700	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	-	0.00	6	12500	7375	.59	.59	.59	.59	-	.590	.208	3				
.410	.540	NATIONAL LOGS.	-	0.00	63	10843	20433	.49	.45	.40	.45	+.05	.429	1.774	3				
.440	.370	INTERNED. PETRO. CHEM.	-	0.00	4	26242	12009	.61	.61	.61	.61	-	.610	.875	1				
.610	.550	JOR. ROPEWORK TRDS.	-	0.00	8	3550	2090	.59	.59	.58	.59	-	.589	.078	3				
.620	.540	JOR. SULPHON-CHRM	-	5.93	27	7413	8880	1.17	1.23	1.13	1.18	+.01	1.180	.148	4				
1.200	1.140	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.1	0.00	46	102900	90900	.88	.91	.86	.86	-.02	.876	1.715	6				
.900	.820	UNIV. MOOR. INDUS.	391.9	.25	48	10400	10843	.71	.74	.72	.72	+.01	.720	.186	4				
.820	.700	JOR. RESOURCES	9.7	13.89	31	14000	28605	.90	.91	.90	.90	-	.907	.374	6				
.900	.890	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	30	31550	28605	.90	.91	.90	.90	-	.907	.374	6				
1.250	1.170	INTL. TOBACCO	6.6	0.00	24	26000	31200	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	-	1.200	.260	3				
1.050	.960	UNION CH. & VEG.	33.0	4.65	18	7442	5441	.72	.74	.73	.73	+.01	.731	.550	4				
.740	.770	JORDAN STEEL	15.3	0.00	11	6950	50797	1.02	1.04	1.01	1.01	-.01	1.019	1.108	2				
.630	.540	WID. EAST COMPLEX	7.9	15.63	86	175600	109611	.62	.64	.61	.64	+.02	.624	.798	4				
					737	1667498	3581880	INDEX NUMBER : 112.42			CHANGE : 1.387								
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR																			
GRAND TOTAL					1113	7030301	5112681	INDEX NUMBER : 166.88			CHANGE : 0.657								
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	TURNOVER	NO. OF TRADING DAYS				
IGN	LOW																		
1.000	1.000	JOR. INT. INSURANCE CO	-	0.00	4	24300	24300	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-.02	1.000	.408	3				
.850	.320	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	-	0.00	1	6000	-	.20	.34	.33	.34	+.02	.335	.182	2				
.870	.850	JOR. TRADE FAC.	10.1	0.00	42	174950	61134	.36	.38	.36	.38	+.02	.367	4.164	4				
.650	.450	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	-	0.00	69	191700	97559	.48	.53	.48	.51	+.03	.509	1.917	4				
.720	.700	UNION INV. 50T	-	0.00	46	183324	18602	.70	.71	.70	.71	+.01	.709	.829	4				
1.300	1.120	ARAB FOR INVESTMENT	82.7	0.00	8	157700	186270	1.30	1.26	1.12	1.26	+.04	1.181	.994	4				
.930	.680	AL-DAMLIYAH 75T	-	0.00	1	2000	1840	.92	.92	.92	.92	-	.920	.022	1				
.930	.910	AL-SABAH INV. CO.	327.9	0.00	1	10000	45000	.71	.70	.70	.70	-.01	.650	.714	1				
2.220	1.950	SPECIALIZED JOR. 75T	-	0.00	22	206100	39943	2.00	1.95	1.80	1.95	-.05	1.950	2.785	2				
.490	.450	ARAB FOOD & MED.	-	0.00	4	2104	967	.47	.46	.46	.46	-.01	.460	.600	2				
.170	.280	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	33.4	0.00	8	6350	1900	.29	.29	.29	.29	-	.290	.111	3				
.170	.160	JOR. INDUS. BAKERY-JERICO	-	0.00	5	4500	750	.17	.17	.16	.16	-.01	.167	.265	2				
.640	.640	HILASANT PHARM. 75T	-	0.00	7	6980	2691	.64	.64	.64	.64	-	.640	.061	1				
.150	.160	UNION TOBACCO 75T	-	0.00	5	2736	306	1.34	1.36	1.36	1.36	-	1.305	.060	1				
.710	.680	RAZI PHARM.	-	0.00	4	200	158	.90	.85	.73	.73	-.17	.790	.003	3				
.950	.900	ADVANCED PHARMA. IND.	-	0.00	38	146350	39418	.27	.29	.27	.29	+.02	.281	2.005	4				
.320	.240	INDUS. ENG. CHEM.	-	0.00	4	1639	944	.57	.60	.58	.60	+.02	.583	.041	3				
.660	.570	INDUS. CERAMIC	15.2	0.00	21	26180	14449	.54	.56	.54	.55	+.01	.554	.261	4				
.570	.510	NATL. POULTRY	-	0.00	3	200	133	.95	.95	.95	.95	-	.950	.665	0.00	4			
.950	.950	OFFICIAL HEARING 75T	12.7	0.00	6	42000	42100	1.05	1.05	1.00	1.05	-	1.002	1.040	2				
1.050	1.000	SPADY MIX CONCRETE	94.6	0.00	6	1800	765	.67	.68	.67	.68	+.01	.675	.015	3				
1.100	.900	ARAB INV. POOL FACT.	48.2	0.00	11	16443	16435	.99	1.00	.99	1.00	+.01	1.000	.274	4				
1.110	1.000	UBUDITHAN 75T	-	0.00	174	111155	110042	1.11	1.11	1.17	1.25	+.14	.992	3.279	4				
1.000	1.000	KHARAL PRINT CO. 75T	-	0.00	4	315750	96425	1.00	1.00	.95	.95	-.05	.750	1.441	2				
.580	.450	NATL. MULT. ENG. MARSH	-	0.00	45	106800	51254	.48	.48	.47	.48	-	.480	.356	4				
GRAND TOTAL					558	1685936	1269456												



Serena Williams of the U.S. reacts to missing a point during her quarter-final match against Arantxa Sanchez Vicario at the Sydney International tournament at White City, Sydney. Sanchez Vicario defeated Williams 6-2 6-1 (Reuters photo)



Top seed Australian Pat Rafter reacts after missing a point during his semi-final match against Tim Henman at the Sydney International tournament at White City, Sydney. Henman defeated Rafter 7-6 7-5 to book a place in Saturday's final (Reuters photo)

Sisters' hopes of an all-Williams final dashed Henman downs Rafter to reach final

SYDNEY (AFP) — American teenager Venus Williams powered through the semis of the Sydney International here Friday but Arantxa Sanchez Vicario stood in the way of an all-Williams final.

A seven-match winning streak here took its toll on 16-year-old Serena Williams, who lost 6-2, 6-1 to the Spanish fifth seed in the semi-finals.

Sanchez Vicario welcomed the new crop of hot young teenagers on the tennis scene, but warned they would find some stiff competition from the more established players.

"Even though I'm ten years older than them I'm still there, and experience counts a lot," said the World No. 9.

Venus had some trouble closing out her semi-final against Japan's top player Ai Sugiyama but eventually the towering 17-year-old overpowered her diminutive opponent 6-1, 7-6 (7-2).

The elder Williams said she had reached a milestone in reaching the final of the Sydney tournament, where she will play Sanchez Vicario for her first tour title.

"In the past, I've had some mental problems, when I get into tough matches just to hang tough and really go at it," she said. "Just to believe that the opponent's not going to give it to me — I have to take it."

On her way to the finals, she scored an upset win over world number one

Martina Hingis, a victory which helped send her ranking from 21 to 15 this week.

The Williams duo certainly appear to be brimming with confidence — this week they predicted they would dominate the women's field at the Australian Open next week. "I was brought up to be strong because it's not an easy world out there," Venus said Friday.

She also said that some of that confidence came from their days on the junior circuit, where the Amazonian pair thrashed all comers. "I believe I was so much stronger and taller than the other girls, it was just a joke," she said.

Among the men at the Sydney tournament, Britain's Tim Henman sent

Australian first seed Pat Rafter packing Friday, to secure a finals berth in the tournament he won last year.

"It's obviously a good win, a great win, one of my best," said Henman, who is ranked 19 in the world.

"Especially in the circumstances, the way he's been playing recently in his home country, it's a good win and a great boost for me going into the (Australian) Open."

The Briton said he fancied his chances against Slovakia's Karol Kucera in the final Saturday.

Rafter, who said this week that he and Henman were "good mates", was upbeat about the loss, insisting he needed some time out to prepare for next week's Australian Open.

Sampras suffers 2nd upset before Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Pete Sampras lost for the second time in three days on Friday, throwing his own obstacles into the clear path to the Australian Open final given by the draw.

Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine beat the World No. 1 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 at the Kooyong Classic invitation tournament, following up on Sampras' defeat by French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten on Wednesday.

Men's No. 2 seed Pat Rafter also suffered an upset when he lost to Britain's Tim Henman 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 in the semi-final of the Sydney International ATP tournament.

Although not a full tour event, the defeat will still be a concern to Sampras, who is coming back from several weeks of intensive treatment to a badly torn calf muscle suffered at the Davis Cup final in December.

Defending champions Sampras and Martina Hingis could see early replays of last year's finals because of the luck of Friday's draw.

Hingis may clash with Mary Pierce of France and Sampras with Carlos Moya of Spain in the quarter finals of the first Grand Slam of the year which starts at Melbourne Park on Monday with \$6.5 million of prize money at stake.

Hingis definitely has the more difficult path to the final of the two favourites, while the women's draw threw up more tantalising clashes.

The 17-year-old Swiss starts against Germany's Wiltrud Probst but may have to take on Russian teenager Anna Kournikova in the third round.

That could turn into a major battle of the starlets expected to dominate the women's game into the next century.

After that looms Belgium's Dominique Van Roost, the No. 14 seed, who battled to the quarter finals with a stomach muscle injury that forced her to retire.

Pierce would follow, if the 1995 champion, now seeded fifth, beats Li Fang of China in the first round, with American Chanda Rubin the other main threat in her section of the draw. Hingis beat Pierce 6-2, 6-2 in last year's

final to claim her first Grand Slam title.

No. 2 seed Lindsay Davenport starts against Amelie Cocheteau of France, but the most attention of the early rounds will be focussed on American sisters Venus and Serena Williams, who could meet in the second round.

Serena, who was beaten by Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the Sydney tournament on Friday, must first get by tough sixth seed Irena Spirlea of Romania in her opening match. Venus, who reached the Sydney semi-finals, plays Alexia Dechaume Ballaret of France in her first round.

In Sydney, the controversial sisters have been openly warning rivals that they expect to sweep aside Hingis and dominate women's tennis for the next decade.

Sampras, the most accomplished men's player of the past decade, starts against Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands in the first round.

His first severe test could be Australia's Mark Philippoussis, the 15th seed, in the fourth round and then Moya, the seventh seed, in the quarter finals. Sampras beat Moya 6-2, 6-3, 6-3 in last year's final to take the Australian Open title for the second time.

No. 2 seed Rafter starts against world number 49 Jeff Tarango of the United States, but after it becomes extremely tough.

He is likely to face former Open finalist Todd Martin in the second round and could meet gifted Andre Medvedev of the Ukraine in the third.

If he reaches the fourth round, Rafter could meet former World No. 1 Andre Agassi or Spanish 16th seed Albert Costa, the player who beat him in the first round last year.

Britain's two big hopes fifth seed Greg Rusedski and Henman, one of the top unseeded players, start against qualifiers.

Rusedski could play Brazil's French Open champion Gustavo Kuerten, the 12th seed, in the fourth round. Henman, third seed Michael Chang, 12th seed Goran Ivanisevic and Henman all loom in the quarter final.

1998 WINTER OLYMPICS PREVIEW

Nagano Olympics on 'Roof of Japan'

NAGANO (AFP) — The Winter Olympics are coming to the 'Roof of Japan' — and into the arms of a 1,400-year-old Buddhist temple which has been open to the faithful, regardless of their sexes or sects.

Located in the central mountains of Japan's main island, Honshu, this apple-growing region has been developed in the past century as one of the country's premier winter sport resorts.

Zenkoji Temple, long protected as a national treasure, has been non-sectarian and open to women when other Buddhist holy places were not. "We have history of helping people to salvation beyond sectarian differences," Zenkoji's chief executive Shuei Wakaomi said. "That is compatible with the Olympic spirit of peace."

The mountains, some of them soaring over 3,000 metres, were first introduced to the world by an English missionary, Walter Weston, through his book "Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps" (1896).

Although one third the size of the famed Swiss Alps, the scenic terrain is the main attraction of Nagano's tourism which annually draws over 100 million visitors — compared with Japan's entire population of 120 million.

The sporting extravaganza has led to the construction of high-rail and road links with Tokyo, some 200 kilometres to the southeast, through mountains which gave this region an unpopular moniker, Tibet of Japan.

"This year will raise the curtain on Nagano with new trappings and hopes," said Zenkoji's chief priest Jiko Ishizuka in his New Year message.

Seven million pilgrims come every year to touch the so-called 'key to paradise' at the temple's grand sanctuary, a kind of see-Naples-and-die experience.

The CBS network, which paid a record \$375 million for U.S. television rights to the Winter Olympics, has set up an anchor studio on the grounds of the holy place.

The 18th Winter Olympics are scattered over Nagano

prefecture (13,585 square meters) with their three main sites including the main city with the same name. Of the province's 2.2 million people, 360,000 live in Nagano City.

Hakuba, some 40 kilometres east of the city, will host downhill, cross-country and ski-jumping events as well as both Alpine and Nordic Combined.

Formerly a rice-growing village and base for attacking the Japanese Alps, Hakuba has grown into a major skiing resort with 800 lodging facilities.

Other skiing events will be staged in the rival hills of Shigakogen, 100 kilometres to the east, where Japan's first chair lift was installed in 1946 by U.S. occupation forces.

These sites are located around the 36th parallel, making them the southernmost hosts of Winter Games, roughly on the same latitude as Athens and San Francisco.

Nagano hopes to use the Olympics as impetus to catapult itself into a 'techno-highland', as its governor Goro Yoshimura puts it, upgrading its electronics and precision industries.

It has cost \$13.8 billion to build railways and roads and a dozen of stadiums and facilities for the Games, but transportation chief Takashi Yamada admits congestion will be a problem.

"Even now the rush hour is a problem," said Yamada, who hopes an appeal to the public to swap their cars for public transport will see a reduction in regular traffic of 30 percent during the Games.

Strenuous efforts have also been made to ensure bus drivers know their routes in a bid to avoid a repeat of the embarrassing transport shambles at the Atlanta Olympics last year.

But an annual outlay of more than \$23 million will be necessary to maintain the buildings.

"We may become a Little Tokyo," said Junichiro Imai, who leads a citizens watchdog. "But we will be left with the ruins of the Olympics."

76ers down Bulls 106-96

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Allen Iverson scored 31 points and the Philadelphia 76ers overcame Scottie Pippen's most productive game since his return to snap their 16-game losing streak against Chicago with a 106-96 victory Thursday night.

Pippen had 22 points, five assists and four rebounds, but he ran out of steam after making six of his first eight shots and scoring 20 points in the first half. He missed eight straight shots at one point and committed two turnovers midway through the fourth quarter when Chicago was trying to rally. Derrick Coleman added 18 points for Philadelphia, which hadn't beaten the Bulls since Dec. 8, 1993.

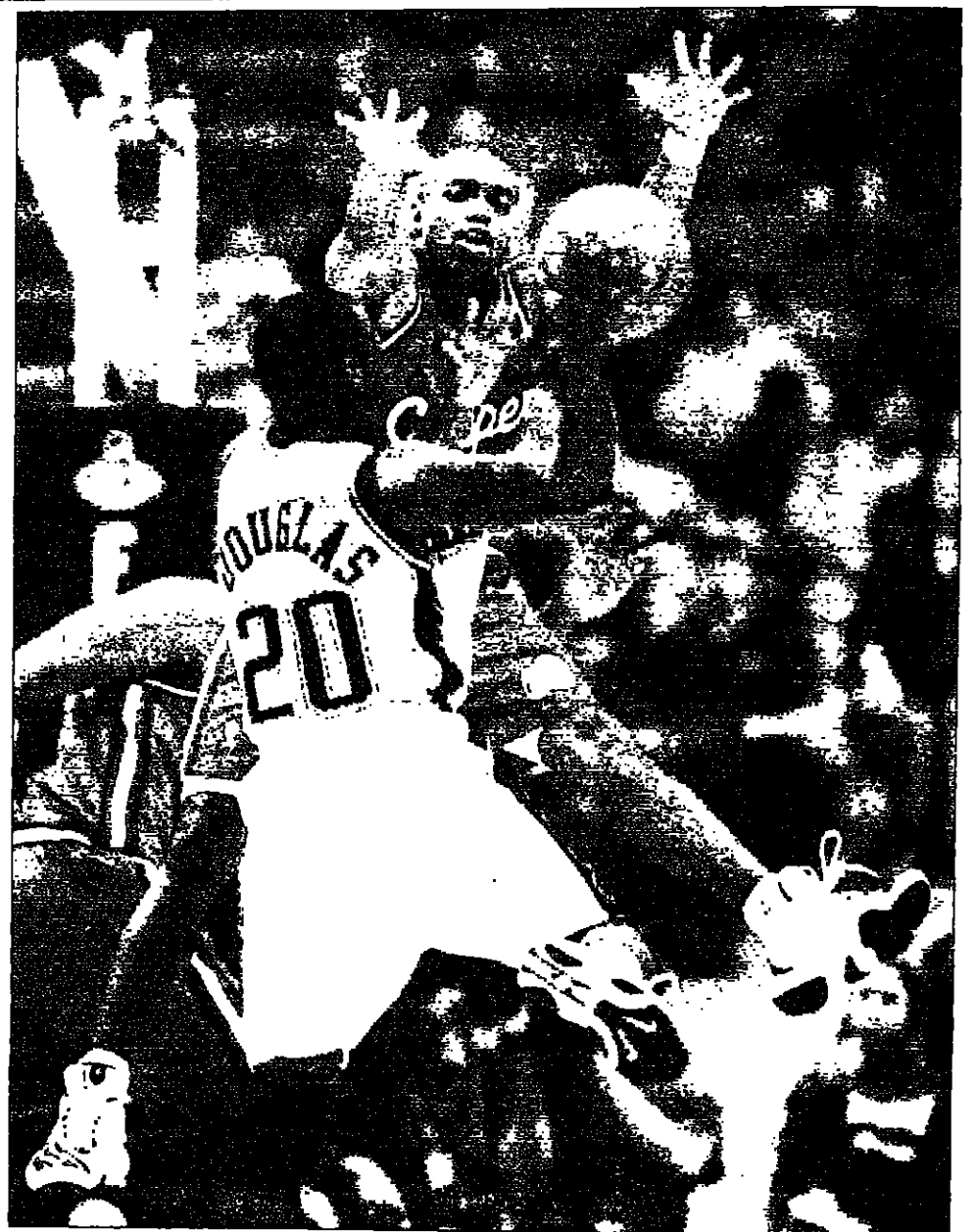
Michael Jordan scored 20 for Chicago, but he and Pippen were the only Bulls in double figures. Dennis Rodman grabbed 20 rebounds, although 19 came in the first three quarters.

• **Celtics 97, Grizzlies 93:** In Boston, the Boston Celtics finally took a lead and even won a game, snapping a five-game losing streak by beating Vancouver despite a Grizzlies-record 41 points by Bryant Reeves.

The Celtics had not led since the first half against Chicago on Jan. 6 — a span of 4 games. They took their first lead, 55-54, with 7:35 left in the third quarter and went on to hand the Grizzlies their 12th consecutive loss.

Reeves, who also had 12 rebounds, broke the club record of 40 points set by Anthony Peeler on Feb. 4, 1977. Antoine Walker led Boston with 22 points and 10 rebounds.

• **Clippers 119, Nets 116:** In East Rutherford, New



New Jersey Nets guard Sherman Douglas (20) leaps high on defense in the first period of their NBA game at the Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford, New Jersey (Reuters photo)

Jersey, Rodney Rogers matched his season high with 29 points to lead the Los Angeles Clippers to only their fourth road win of the season.

Lamond Murray had 24 points and 10 rebounds. Darrick Martin had a season-high 20 points and rookie centre Maurice Taylor had 10 of his 12 points in the fourth quarter as the Clippers snapped a four-game losing streak and improved their road mark to 4-18.

Keith Van Horn scored 26 points for the Nets, but the rookie only had six in the second half. Jayson Williams added 20 points and 13 rebounds for new jersey, while Sherman Douglas had 18 points and a season-high 17 assists.

• **Pistons 95, Hornets 94**

(OT): In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Brian Williams hit a driving layup to put Detroit ahead, then made a key block to preserve the Pistons' overtime victory over the Charlotte Hornets.

Williams, who finished with 15 points, scored what proved to be the winning basket with 19.6 seconds remaining in overtime. After a Detroit foul, the Hornets called a time-out with 6.4 seconds left.

When play resumed, Anthony Mason rebounded the ball to Vlade Divac,

who tried to drive the right side of the lane. But his attempt at an underhand layup was blocked by Williams. Grant Hill, who led the pistons with 30 points, grabbed the rebound and heaved the ball upcourt as time

expired. Mason led Charlotte with 19 points. Divac added 18 points.

• **Supersonics 103, Heat 85:** In Seattle, the Supersonics snapped a two-game losing streak and defeated the Miami Heat for the 11th straight time in Seattle.

Gary Payton had 20 points and eight assists for the Sonics, who became the first team to score 100 points against Miami since Dec. 16, a span of 13 games.

The Sonics had a huge advantage from 3-point range. They made 12 of 17 shots from long distance, while Miami was only 4-of-17.

Alonzo Mourning led Miami with 17 points and 12 rebounds.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	George Clooney & Nicole Kidman ... in THE PEACEMAKER Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Steven Spielberg's ... TWISTER Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	SCREAM Shows: 12:00, 6:30 AL MASEER (Arabic) Nour Al Sharif Shows: 8:30, 10:45 HERCULES Shows: 2:00 p.m.	CONSPIRACY THEORY Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45 MR. BEAN Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN BEVERLY HILLS NINJA Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN Salma Hayek ... in FOOLS RUSH IN Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155

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Netanyahu to show 'flexibility and firmness' in Clinton talks

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would show "flexibility and firmness" in his crucial talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton on the deadlocked Middle East peace process next Tuesday.

"I am leaving for Washington with the flexibility and firmness necessary to reach an accord," he told reporters before a meeting with ambassadors to Israel Friday.

"This new agreement must provide us with guarantees that the principles of

the agreements already reached will be respected," he said.

"When we demand that the Palestinians respect their commitments, that is not a tactical move, but the very essence of the agreements," said Mr. Netanyahu who has also held the foreign affairs portfolio since the resignation of his foreign minister, David Levy, earlier this month.

Mr. Netanyahu has hardened his position on the peace process in the run-up to the Washington talks. His government has made

an overdue West Bank troop withdrawal dependent on Palestinian readiness to accept a long list of conditions it says are contained within past agreements.

And his government has also made clear that it intends to keep the majority of the West Bank, which it occupied in 1967, in any final settlement with the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu's office has also said that the government will not have determined the extent of the military pullback it proposes to make from the West Bank in

time for his meeting with Mr. Clinton.

The United States has been pressing Israel for the past four months to carry out a "significant and credible" West Bank withdrawal in accordance with the Oslo peace agreements in order to rescue the deadlocked peace process.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who is due to meet Mr. Clinton next Thursday, has said that he regards the Washington talks as a decisive "turning point" for the peace process.

Israeli 'sacred cow' sent back to shed

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A sacred red cow belonging to ultra-Orthodox Israelis turned out to be an ordinary heifer when white hairs were discovered in its tail, Haaretz newspaper reported Friday.

Under Jewish law, the Second Temple, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD, cannot be rebuilt until it has been purified by the ashes of a sacrificed, entirely red three-year-old heifer.

The ruins of the temple, in occupied Jerusalem, are Judaism's holiest site.

Tzili, the cow was born in mid-1996 in Israel and belongs to Kfar Hassidim, an ultra-Orthodox town in the north of the country.

When the calf was born, its coat was entirely red, stirring intense excitement on the part of the ultra-Orthodox community, which saw it as a sign that the temple would soon be

rebuilt.

Israeli authorities, however, feared that Tzili's birth would be exploited by right-wing Israelis to destroy the Al Aqsa Mosque complex, built atop the temple ruins and which is now the third holiest site in Islam.

Rabbi Shmurya Shore, who is in charge of Tzili, has taken every precaution to safeguard the heifer.

He separated Tzili from the rest of the herd of 70 milk cows, to prevent any injury. In addition, the heifer has been under 24-hour guard to ensure that it is not abducted.

Tzili's coat has been closely examined because the appearance of more than two hairs of a non-red colour disqualify it from being a sacred red heifer.

However, 10 white hairs have sprouted in Tzili's tail, and the heifer has been sent back to the cowshed with the

rest of the herd.

The disappointed rabbi blamed excessive attention from the news media for turning Tzili's hair white.

"Undoubtedly media harassment is the cause," he told Haaretz.

But the ultra-Orthodox still have one hope: Tzili has been inseminated with the semen of a red bull, and the calf is due in six months.

Last year, when the red cow's existence was made public, the newspaper said the matter could be the prelude to a tragedy of apocalyptic proportions.

The authorities fear that destruction of the mosque complex to make way for a new temple would trigger a vast war.

According to Jewish tradition, the rebuilding of the temple will herald the coming of the Messiah.

Bosnian Serb candidate gives up bid for highest government position

BANJA LUKA (AFP) — Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavcic's candidate for the Bosnian Serb premiership, Mladen Ivanic, has given up trying to form a government, the presidency announced Friday.

Ivanic, a 39-year-old non-party economist who lost to an ultra-nationalist Serb candidate in 1995 elections, had given up his bid because he could not muster enough votes in parliament to back him, a statement issued by Plavcic said.

The ultra-nationalist Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and its ally the Radical Party (SRS) blocked Mr. Ivanic's candidacy and have claimed the premiership and a majority of government posts for themselves.

The ultranationalists form the largest bloc in the 83-seat parliament following elections last year but no group has a majority.

The Bosnian Serb parliament has remained deadlocked over the choice of prime minister amid a struggle for power between the hardliners and Mr. Plavcic.

Mr. Ivanic's bid had been backed by the international community and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

The Bosnian Serb parliament had been expected to vote on his candidacy and government programme on Saturday. The meeting at Bijeljina was maintained in spite of Mr. Ivanic's renunciation, said the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA.

Mr. Ivanic sought to form a government of national unity which was to comprise technocrats and representatives from the principal Bosnian Serb political parties.

But when ultra-nationalists turned down requests that key government posts such as the interior, finance, information and justice ministries be given to technocrats not linked to any particular political party.

Mr. Ivanic renounced his bid for the top government post, he said in a press statement.



WHEELS FOR ANOTHER PLANET: Robert Anderson from Pasadena, Cal., member of the NASA Pathfinder team, demonstrates one of the three Sojourner robot vehicle models at the CMT 98 fair, an international fair for caravanning, motor and tourism in Stuttgart, Germany, Friday. Sojourner No.1 is rolling on Mars, number two is in the NASA headquarters in Washington (AP photo)

Russia promises to stop helping Iranian missile programme — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Russia has promised the United States that it will stop Russian companies and scientists from technologically helping Iran's ballistic missile programme, the New York Times said Friday.

Senior U.S. officials told the daily that concrete promises were made and that Russia appeared more sincere than in the past about ending private Russian aid to Iran, which has prompted the U.S. Congress to threaten sanctions.

"For their own interests, the Russians are getting serious about closing the gap between what they've said repeatedly and what's actually happening," one unidentified U.S. official said.

The announcement followed the return Wednesday from Moscow of special U.S. envoy, Frank Wisner, the officials said, adding that Mr. Wisner had briefed U.S. President Bill Clinton of the results of his trip.

Besides arguments that a ballistic missile armed Iran would pose a security threat to Russia, the officials said, the U.S. government has also made clear to Russia that the U.S. Congress was moving to pass sanctions against Russian firms that did missile business with Iran.

The officials were reluctant to detail what Mr. Wisner was told in Moscow, but they said

that while the problem with Russia was not over, convincing steps towards its elimination had been taken.

"We have a process now, and specific commitments," another official said when asked why Russia should be taken at its word. "The two countries [Russia and the United States] now have a plan to work together in their own interests."

The officials noted that in the past six months Russia has expelled an Iranian diplomat for trying to get missile help, and cancelled a contract between Iran and the Russian company NPO Trud for missile motor development.

Beijing calls for early implementation of China-U.S. nuclear agreement

BEIJING (AFP) — China on Friday welcomed U.S. President Bill Clinton's signing of a certification of the end of a Washington embargo on China-bound exports of nuclear technology.

The White House on Thursday announced Mr. Clinton signed documents on Jan. 12 to effectively reactivate a never-implemented 1985 agreement allowing trade in non-military nuclear technologies between the two countries.

"The Chinese side welcomes Mr. Clinton's signing of the relevant certifications to initiate the agreement," a Foreign Ministry spokesman told AFP by telephone.

"It is hoped the U.S. will complete the relevant procedures as soon as possible so an early implementation of this agreement will be realised," he said in a likely reference to the U.S. Congress — which may move to block the initiative.

"China and the U.S. share a common interest in the peaceful

use of nuclear technology. An early implementation of the agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear equipment will benefit both sides," the spokesman said.

The 12-year-old agreement was never put into effect due to concerns about alleged Chinese transfers of nuclear weapons to other countries, but Mr. Clinton announced plans to lift the embargo during a Washington visit by Chinese President Jiang Zemin in October.

The U.S. embassy here said Congress will not be in session until the end of this month, the period extends until March 12 or 13, it said.

Members of the House of Representatives have already introduced bills opposing the White House initiative.

An executive with the Shanghai office of Westinghouse — one of the top U.S. makers of nuclear power

equipment — said his company was optimistic the embargo would be lifted, as the amount of U.S. business at stake is huge.

"We think in the middle of March, the certifications will become effective," said Ting Qian, a representative with Westinghouse Energy Systems Business Unit.

The China National Nuclear Corp., which would handle imports of U.S. equipment bound for Chinese nuclear plants, refused to comment.

China is expected to spend between \$50 billion to \$60 billion by 2015 to meet its nuclear energy needs, making it by far the fastest growing nuclear market in the world.

U.S. companies like Westinghouse, General Electric and ABB Combustion Engineering Nuclear Systems have long complained that they were losing business to Canada, Russia and France — all of which have signed agreements to build nuclear power plants in China.

Head for Diana's charity sought in advertisement

LONDON (AFP) — An advertisement in the British Guardian newspaper invited applications for the post of chief executive of the Diana, Princess of Wales, Memorial Fund. The job carries a salary of \$125,000.

The fund trustees said in the advertisement that they want "a strategic thinker with the vision and drive to set up a major operation." Along with setting up the organisation to administer the fund, the chief executive will also be expected to formulate strategy, manage donations and design the machinery to assess grant applications. Her former butler, Paul Burrell, told The Sun that he intended to throw his hat in the ring, saying: "I believe I have the perfect credentials. I hope I will be considered for the position."

Thatcher disturbed by football

LONDON (AFP) — Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher hates football according to former Chancellor Kenneth Clarke.

When asked whether he was part of a government which regarded football as an "enemy within," he replied: "Well I don't think the government thought that, but I think Margaret Thatcher [did]."

"Somebody took Margaret to some game in Scotland where she appeared as a prime minister and whether it was the songs the crowd sang or something, it had a very marked effect on her. So thereafter, whenever she discovered that some of her ministers went to football matches regularly, she wondered why we were joining this band of hooligans week by week."

"She kept considering policy on football hooliganism, and as far as I could see, the small group of ministers she relied on to put policy together included people who had never seen a football match in their lives."

James Bond draws line at Johannesburg's muggers

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — James Bond gets the better of the baddies in his guise as 007 — but he's not so keen to take on the muggers and thugs of Johannesburg's city centre.

"I've heard of downtown Johannesburg," Bond — in the form of actor Pierce Brosnan — told a press conference.

"Everyone's heard of it," he said, adding he would not be volunteering to clean up the central business district, where muggers and pickpockets prey on the ever-decreasing number of tourists who venture there. In the latest 007 film, "Tomorrow Never Dies," Bond is far more forceful, literally carving up media baron Elliot Carver, who is trying to spark a war between China and Britain purely for profit and for power.

At 62, Woody Allen wants to have children with Soon-Yi

PARIS (AFP) — Children, newly-wed 62-year-old Woody Allen said Thursday, are "a reasonable option."

In an interview in the French daily Le Figaro, the actor-director said he and new 27-year-old bride Soon-Yi Previn had discussed having children. "Why not?", he said. "I feel young and full of energy and my parents, you know, are still alive. My father is about to turn 97 and my mother is 91 and they're well."

"That's why I believe having children is a reasonable option for the two of us."

Turkish court paves way for trial of ex-prime minister

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish court of appeals Friday paved the way for legal proceedings against former Prime Minister Tansu Ciller, suspected of misusing secret state funds while in power.

The court upheld a six-year prison sentence for a swindler who had been convicted of illegally receiving state funds from Ms. Ciller and using them to benefit her conservative True Path Party.

After Friday's decision, state prosecutors will be free to charge Ms. Ciller with using secret state funds for her own domestic political purposes, legal sources said.

In the likely event of a legal process and if parliament lifts her immunity, Ms. Ciller, who was Turkey's first woman prime minister, will be tried by the constitutional court.

If the court convicts Ms. Ciller, she will be forced to

end her political career, under the Turkish constitution.

The swindler, Selcuk Parsadan, confessed during his trial that, purporting to be an influential retired army general, he had telephoned Ms. Ciller in November 1995 and proposed to campaign for her True Path Party for upcoming general elections in December.

Agreeing to the deal, Ms. Ciller then sent Parsadan some \$72,000 from a secret state fund, according to the swindler.

The swindler, who was also understood to have cheated some other politicians and businessmen, was caught in 1996 and last year sentenced to a six-year prison term.

Under Turkish law, prime ministers are entitled to use secret government funds worth millions of dollars only for special operations and to

the benefit of the state.

Misuse of those funds for personal purposes is a serious crime and deserves trial by the constitutional court, Turkey's highest judicial body.

Heading the government between July 1993 and March 1996, Ms. Ciller then joined an Islamist-led coalition administration, becoming foreign minister in June 1996.

But that government, led by former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, had to step down in June last year amid major rows with the country's pro-secular army generals over creeping Islamisation in the country.

During her partnership with Mr. Erbakan, Ms. Ciller narrowly escaped three parliamentary moves to oust her on charges of corruption, the alleged source of her personal wealth.

Turks, whose sovereignty the countries contest, Mr. Bikas said. According to informed Greek sources, several Turkish trawlers and a naval vessel approached to within 500 metres of the island and for an hour refused a Greek boat's demands that they leave.

Greece and Turkey almost came to blows over the island in January 1996. The dispute was only ended by U.S. intervention.

Greece informs Washington of concerns over rising tension with Turkey

ATHENS (AFP) — The Greek Foreign Ministry has informed Washington of concerns over the rising tension between Greece and Turkey after incidents in the Aegean Sea, a spokesman said Friday.

U.S. Ambassador to Athens Nicholas Burns was called in Thursday evening to meet the Greek official in charge of relations with Turkey to discuss the "tense situation created by the Turks in the Aegean Sea," min-

istry spokesman, Costas Bikas, said.

European Union ambassadors will be approached during the day, Mr. Bikas added.

Ilias Kili, the official who met Mr. Burns, the former U.S. State Department spokesman, reiterated Greek claims that Turkey had repeatedly violated Greek airspace over the area.

He also informed him of an incident Thursday on the island of Imia, known as Kardak to the

Camdessus sees recovery in Korea, Thailand, Indonesia within two and a half years

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — IMF chief Michel Camdessus said Friday that South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia would be recovering within two and a half years at high but sustainable growth rates if they adhere to International Monetary Fund (IMF) programmes.

"Our work is to help countries to reestablish confidence. One of the purposes of the fund is to bring confidence to its members...

not in any miracle way but to help to find the best policies to the given situation," he told a news conference after talks with Malaysian monetary authorities.

Mr. Camdessus said IMF programmes like those for South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand emphasised tight-money monetary policies to help stop the slide in exchange rates "as the world has not yet invented a way of bringing overly

devalued exchange rates where they should be."

But the programmes also stressed "immediate action to correct every weakness in the banking system and starting seriously with structural reforms to remove long-standing impediments to both rigidity, monopoly and government issues."

"The ultimate goal of our programmes is to make sure that in this time of crisis or

at the end of the crisis, these countries can remain more stable to resume their development."

"Tomorrow, it will be difficult for you to see the situation is better in Korea, Thailand or Indonesia. But what I am certain of is that within two or two and half years, you will see these countries recovering at high growth, in a much more sustainable rate than before. They will emerge from

this crisis, if they faithfully apply the programmes, stronger, more efficient than before, and in a greater position to improve the living standards of their people."

"We have an intermediate role which is to shorten the adjustment period and to mitigate the effects by provisioning of finance," he said, adding that the IMF could be flexible "to minimise output losses and also

alleviate the impact of credit tightness on exporters and small and medium-sized enterprises."

Asked about criticism of IMF prescriptions, Mr. Camdessus said: "Doctors must be extremely attentive to their own health. We are attentive to our own health and always adapting ourselves to the changing situation."

He noted that the IMF was the only institution in

the world whose activities were reviewed daily by the 182 countries which received all its documents.

"Transparency of the IMF is a problem. But it is the problem chiefly of its 182 members," he said.

Mr. Camdessus added that the IMF was sensitive to social concerns with programmes trying to integrate economic concerns with social needs.

Jewis
Isra

THE BRONX, N.Y. (AFP) — The Jewish community in the Bronx is mourning the death of a young man who was killed in a shooting incident in the neighborhood of the Bronx. The victim was a 21-year-old man who was shot in the back of the head while walking home from a friend's house. The shooting occurred in the early morning hours of the day. The police are currently investigating the incident and have not yet identified the shooter. The community is holding a funeral for the victim and is offering prayers for his soul.

Volume 23

Iraqi ultimatum

BAHRAIN (AFP) — The Bahraini government has issued an ultimatum to the Iraqi government, demanding that it withdraw its troops from the border area between the two countries. The ultimatum was issued after a series of border clashes between the two countries, which have resulted in the deaths of several people. The Bahraini government has warned that it will take military action if the Iraqi government does not comply with the ultimatum. The Iraqi government has responded by saying that it is not interested in withdrawing its troops and that it will continue to maintain its presence in the area.

THE U.S. (AFP) — The U.S. government has announced that it will provide additional aid to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aid is intended to help the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina cope with the effects of the war and to help them rebuild their lives. The aid will be provided in the form of food, clothing, and other supplies. The U.S. government has also announced that it will provide additional aid to the people of Kosovo. The aid is intended to help the people of Kosovo cope with the effects of the war and to help them rebuild their lives. The aid will be provided in the form of food, clothing, and other supplies.

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